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Lowry & The Editors: Clinton's China Problem — and Ours

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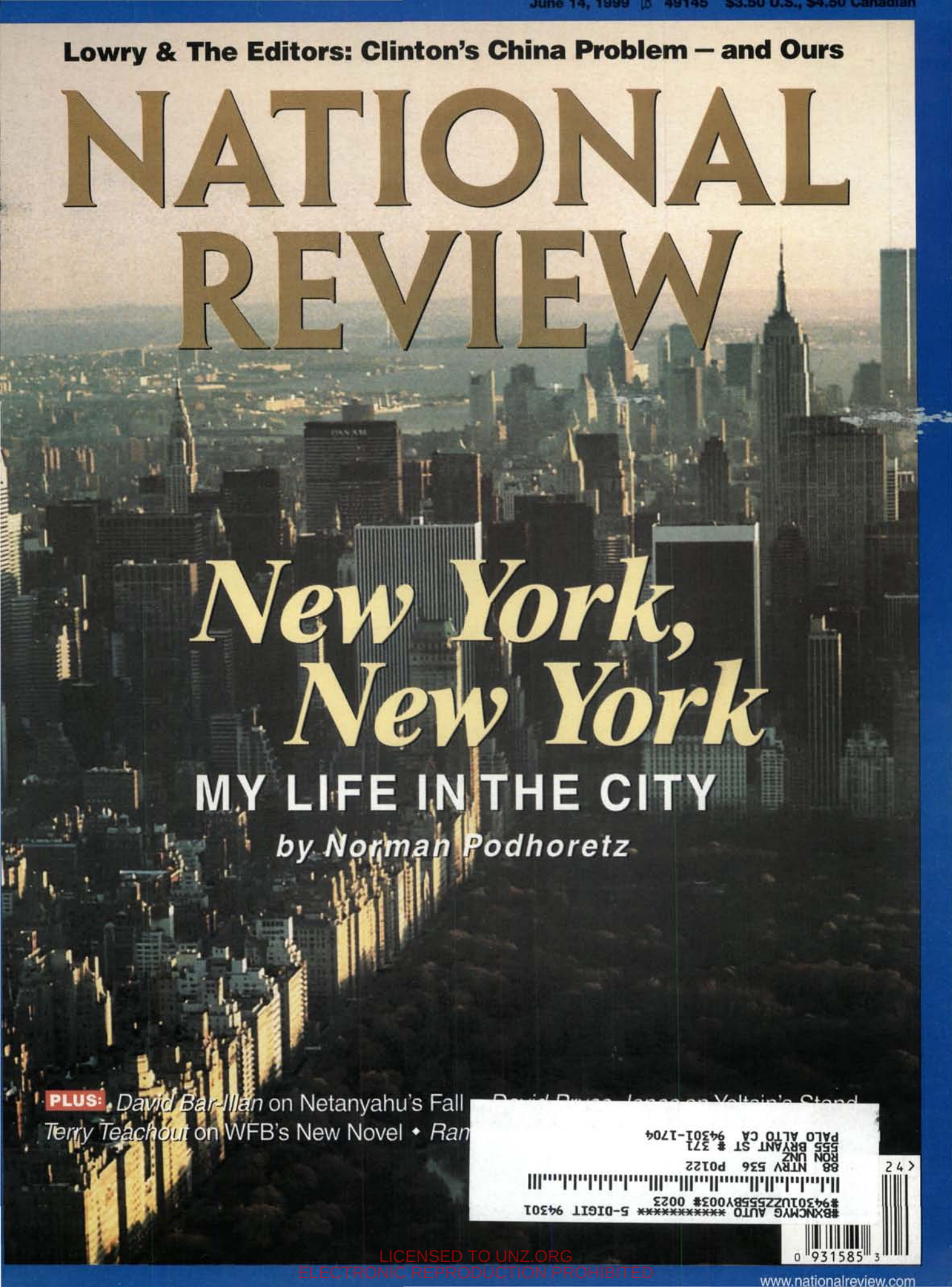

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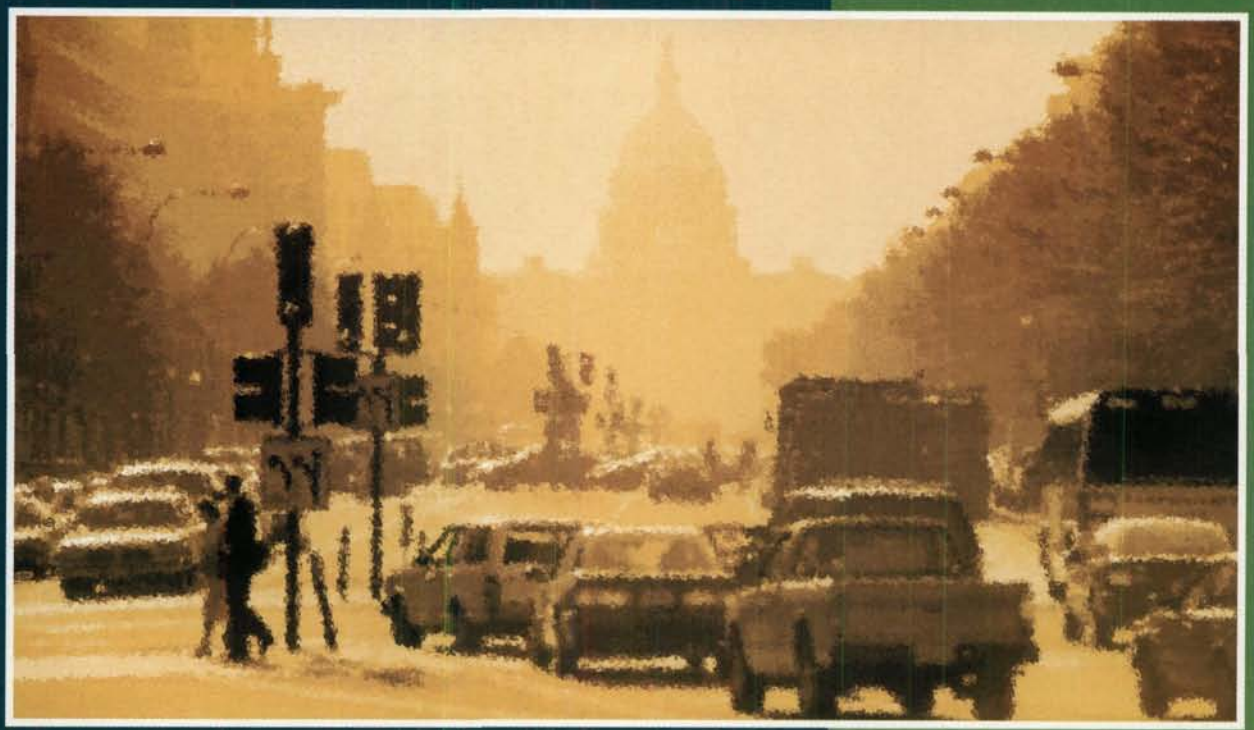

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■ LETTERS ■

THE ANCIENTS, THEN AND NOW

Was David Klinghoffer kidding in his article on the newly restored Greek galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art ("Greek Tragedy," May 17)? Or did he have a headache? Or something against his classical-civilization professor? Why else would he have said that Greeks today are Turks; that ancient Greek art has no "dark side"; that "the stuff is so muffled in verbiage that a good paragraph-long summary of a play by Aeschylus is often more haunting than the play itself"; that "smugness is the dominant impression left by Greek drama"; that Aristotle was a "fast talker"; that drinking was the Greeks' key to understanding life; that Greek culture was "doomed by hubris"? He's lucky that he didn't write that article for one of my classes. He doesn't seem to have done his homework. C minus.

Mary Lefkowitz
Wellesley, Mass.

I was amazed by Klinghoffer's "Greek Tragedy," ridiculing Greece and Greeks, past and present. It is surprising that the culture Klinghoffer dismisses as "a little shallow" has had such a profound influence throughout history. It is equally remarkable that works of the "smug" Socrates, Aeschylus, and Aristotle have so lasted.

But Klinghoffer's most curious line is this: "For all their self-confidence and reasonableness, the ancient Greeks were marked for extinction." Unlike the ancient British, Germans, Italians, and Jews, the ancient Greeks are no longer alive? Or did he mean that modern Greeks are unique in not being genetically identical to the Greeks of 2,000 years ago?

David Dubnau
New York, N.Y.

David Klinghoffer's outrageous remarks about the Greek galleries at the Met remind me of the old joke about Greece's thwarted attempts to recover the Elgin collection of ancient sculpture: "It would appear that the Greeks have permanently lost their marbles."

Conversely in this case, Klinghoffer seems to have lost his. He calls Greek culture shallow, their artists smug, their sculpture cold. He finds the famous *Symposium* "fussy" and even the tragedies dull and verbose. And Aristotle is "a very, very fast talker." But most astoundingly, he says, "Today, Greeks are Turks," citing the many invasions and the centuries under Ottoman rule as proof.

To deny the genius of Greek art is a matter of taste, but to call Greeks Turks is just historically and linguistically incorrect. Modern Greeks speaking the demotic tongue and holding to the Orthodox Christian Church are as different from Turks, who are Moslems and speak Turkish, as Jews are from Arabs.

E. E. Mercier
Erie, Pa.

This article brought to my desk innumerable e-mails and phone calls, mainly from Greeks accusing me of everything from "racial discrimination" to being a paid stooge of the Turkish government. "If you are receiving money from the Turks," one fellow warned, "we will find this out." If only! (Just kidding, Greeks.) For the benefit of these folks, and of E. E. Mercier, let me clarify: In saying that "Greeks are Turks," I was having a little fun and exaggerating, obviously. I apologize to any Greeks whose feelings were hurt.

As for classical Greece, my three years of studying Attic in college hardly qualify me to disagree with Prof. Lefkowitz. But what the heck? I challenge any reader to wade through, e.g., the Agamemnon *of Aeschylus, a jewel of Greek tragedy. See for yourself.*

Mr. Dubnau points out the "profound influence" of the Greek heritage—no news to anybody. I was reminded of that influence recently in hearing a debate between physicists John Polkinghorne and Steven Weinberg. The issue before them: Does physics rule out belief in a Creator? Polkinghorne (a Christian) observed that what separates his view from that of Weinberg (a nonbeliever) is a basic question, namely: In explaining the universe, do we take as our starting point the brute fact of physical existence? Or do we start with our intuition of God? The former approach tends to produce a materialistic cosmology. Leo Strauss identified these two starting points as respectively the Greek and the Biblical. So at the root of materialism, which plagues us today more than ever, we find the ancient Greeks. At least, our respect for them, I argue, should be tempered by that fact. —*DK*

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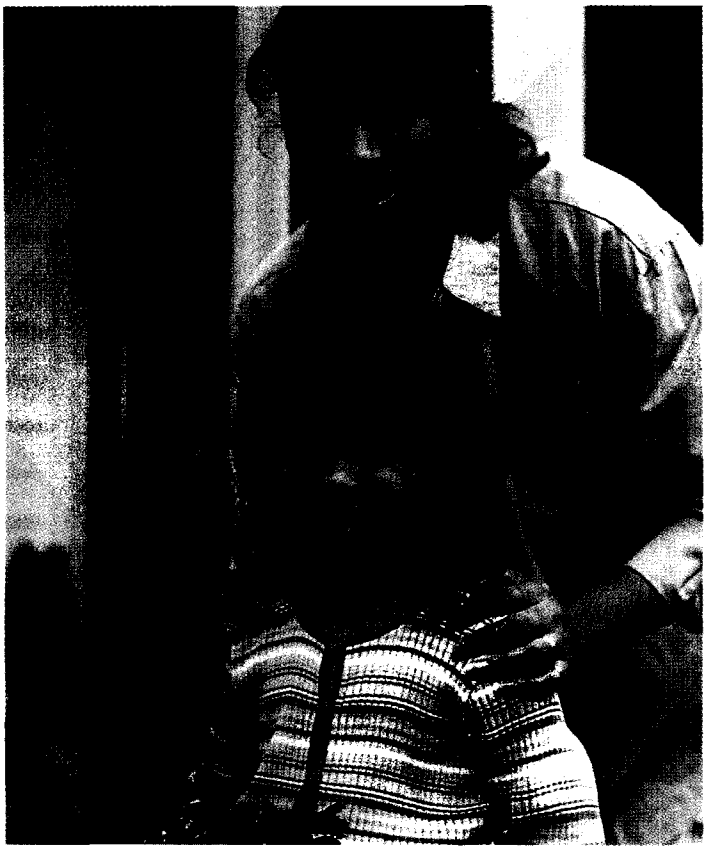

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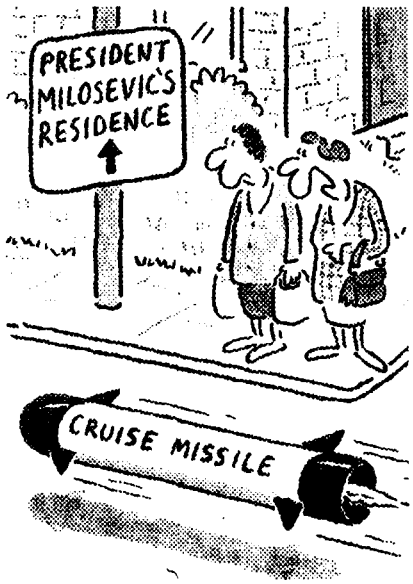
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ President **Clinton** links Kosovo and Littleton: "In both cases, there at least is some evidence that part of the problem was one group of people looking down on another group of people and getting to where they hated them and then getting to where they thought it was legitimate to take them out." . . . **Hillary Clinton** analyzes **Slobodan Milosevic**, whose parents killed themselves, and his wife, whose mother was murdered by Communists: "We are seeing their psychological anguish and bitterness acted out in their incredible hatred of those who are different from them. So I think that in everyday ways, how you treat your own disappointments and whether you're able to forgive the pain that others have caused you and, frankly, to acknowledge the pain you cause to others, it's one of the big challenges we face as we move into this next century. And it's something that I certainly have faced."

■ Clinton, in *New York Times* interview, describes campaign advice he has offered to **Al Gore**: "I have told him to go out and have a good time." . . . **Dick Morris**, on *Fox News Sunday*: "When the president advised Al Gore to have a good time while he's campaigning, I hope the vice president recognizes the limits on accepting the president's advice on that." . . . Democratic consultant **Mandy Grunwald**, on ABC News radio: "[Gore] has a tendency . . . to talk down to people and to sort of sound a little condescending, and he's just got to watch that." . . . **Johnny Chung**, who pleaded guilty to making illegal campaign contributions, says he received invitation in April to attend Los Angeles fundraiser for Gore. . . . **Steve Forbes** objects to appointment of infanticide advocate Peter Singer to position at Princeton, where Forbes is a board member. . . . Appearing on CNBC's *Hardball*, Rep. **John Kasich** (R., Ohio) discusses women in ground combat: If "they want to be able to do that, there is a place for them." On his pro-life views: "I think that it is unlikely that we will change the Constitution. . . . I don't think it's going to happen."

■ Sen. **John McCain** (R., Ariz.) complains about spending: "As a Republican, you know we promised when we came to power in 1994 we wouldn't do those things anymore. Now I have to tell you we do them just as much as the Democrats." . . . Kosovo funding bill inflates to $15 billion, from $6 billion originally requested by White House; includes dorm renovations for congressional pages, radio satellite for Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and livestock subsidies. . . . Drive to double presidential pay to $400,000 per year starting in 2001 gains momentum in Congress. . . . Rep. **Bob Schaffer** (R., Colo.) returns 38 percent of his congressional-office budget to treasury, wins National Taxpayers Union award. Three members—Rep. **Corrine Brown** (D., Fla.), Rep. **Chaka Fattah** (D., Pa.), and Rep. **Earl Hilliard** (D., Ala.)—"apparently went over their office allowances," reports NTU. . . . Boston's tax-exempt public TV station WGBH swaps fundraising lists with Democratic National Committee. . . . Former Rep. **Floyd Flake**, a Democrat and school-choice supporter, considers running for New York City mayor in 2001.



"There goes the neighborhood."

■ Pentagon recognizes witchcraft as a religion and appoints "chaplains" to oversee pagan ceremonies on at least five bases. . . . Federal judge orders release of grand-jury testimony in **Alger Hiss** spy case. . . . Wesleyan University president **Douglas Bennett** orders review of course entitled "Pornography: Writing of Prostitutes," whose reading list includes *Hustler* and whose final project has students producing original work of pornography. . . . State expenditures have risen 56 percent since 1990, far outpacing inflation and population growth, says Cato Institute study. Largest spending increases occurred in Oregon, Texas, and Mississippi. Real spending declined in Alaska, Arizona, and Wyoming, and grew by less than 6 percent in Nevada and Vermont. . . . Supporters of Florida Civil Rights Initiative, modeled on California's Proposition 209, barring race and sex preferences in state institutions, begin to collect signatures for November 2000 ballot. . . . **Susan B. Anthony** List launches series of one-minute, pro-life radio commentaries.

■ Libyan dictator **Muammar Qaddafi** paid part of **Winnie Mandela**'s legal bill when she faced trial in connection with murder charges, says authorized biography of **Nelson Mandela**. . . . **Ernesto Zedillo** becomes first sitting Mexican president to address California legislature. . . . New European Union chairman **Romano Prodi** says creation of single military under EU flag and commander is "logical next step." . . . Hong Kong experts say China is far behind in preparing for Y2K computer bug. . . . Poll suggests that 55 percent of Russians consider themselves Orthodox Christians, up from 34 percent eight years ago. . . . Japanese publishing house scraps plans for translation of bestseller *The Rape of Nanking*, which depicts Japan's wartime atrocities in China, after author Iris Chang refuses to alter content.

■ Following House vote opposing Gore's $30 million proposal to place live satellite pictures of earth on Internet, **Dick Armey** comments: "This idea supposedly came [to Gore] from a dream. Well, I once dreamed I caught a ten foot bass. But I didn't call the Fish and Wildlife Service and ask them to spend $30 million to make sure it happened." **NR**

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THE WEEK

■ Janet Reno and the Justice Department announced that they had shattered a Swiss vitamin cartel. After shattering the American nuclear-weapons cartel, it was easy.

■ The day after the new *Star Wars* movie (*The Phantom Menace*) opened, the House called for the adoption of a missile-defense system as soon as technology permits. The Senate had passed its own bill in March. It has taken nuclear progress by Iraq and North Korea, not to mention almost daily revelations of Chinese spying, to force liberals to admit that the nuclear threat is more than a phantom menace.

■ In a rare legislative victory for colorblindness, Senate Republicans voted to end a federal mandate requiring states to try to make the racial composition of their juvenile inmates match that of the population. States have met this mandate by, for instance, funding after-school programs in minority areas, with the aim of reducing delinquency. But anecdotal evidence suggests that criminal suspects are also being released to rig the numbers. Democratic senators Paul Wellstone and Ted Kennedy fought a rearguard defense of the color-coded legislation, but the Republicans narrowly prevailed. The bill now moves to the House, where the GOP can finish off this form of racial profiling.

■ In Iowa, Al Gore elaborated on an educational agenda he called "truly revolutionary." Much of this "revolution" would in fact be an expansion of the status quo: more schools, more after-school programs, more pre-school subsidies. His other palliatives—linking every school to the Internet, cutting class size—are nothing but expensive diversions from fundamental reform that have already been tried. Still others are promising but vague. Teachers should indeed be tested on the subject matter they teach, rather than on education theory. But how is a president to ensure this? Back in Washington, education secretary Richard Riley made clear what Gore's agenda would mean in practice. Riley proposed federal oversight of the disciplinary code of every public school in the country. He said that even more funding earmarked for poor children should go instead to the education bureaucracy (in the form of "professional development"). And whatever Gore says on the stump, Washington still insists that teachers master education theory. So Gore's reforms amount to more spending and centralization. Predictably, he also issued a pro forma denunciation of school vouchers while in Iowa. Now those would be truly "truly revolutionary."

■ Didn't you just love the 1996 election? Bill Clinton and Bob Dole must have, to judge by their meddlesome kibitzing about the campaigns of Al Gore and Elizabeth Dole. In a late-night phone call to Richard Berke of the *New York Times*, the president said the Gore effort was "in a lot better shape now than it was eight weeks ago" (read: *Eight weeks ago, it was on the rocks*) and added that "this thing will shake out" (*but then again it could fall apart*). Bob Dole offered that his wife was "getting there" (*sure has a ways to go, though, doesn't she?*) and that he might contribute money to one of her rivals, John McCain. He also volunteered that campaigning "is not her whole life," as it clearly is for him and Bill Clinton. Maybe there has been a more envious and self-centered pair in American political history, but we can't think of one offhand.

■ Speculation about the Senate race in New York has centered on whether Hillary Rodham Clinton will run and, if so, whether she will beat Rudolph Giuliani. That Giuliani is the strongest Republican candidate is taken for granted. And he does indeed bring considerable strengths to the race, not least his astounding rescue of New York City. But this analysis ignores the state's Conservative and Right to Life parties. Last fall, a Right to Life candidate sank the Republican nominee for attorney general. Conservative-party support for Gov. George Pataki provided his margin of victory in 1994. Giuliani is not expected to get the Right to Life endorsement in 2000; nor, for that matter, is his rival, Rep. Rick Lazio. Giuliani, who has run with Liberal-party support in the past, may also have trouble with the Conservatives. The only Republican who would be endorsed by both the Conservative and Right to Life parties is Rep. Peter King, who is considering a run. In a close race, it might take a King to take out the Queen.

■ Bill Clinton called him the greatest treasury secretary since Alexander Hamilton, overlooking such worthier candidates as Albert Gallatin and Andrew Mellon. Robert Rubin's actual achievement was more modest, and—as is often the case in government—negative: He refused to interfere with the Federal Reserve or to devalue the dollar. This alone was an improvement on the record of some of his Republican predecessors, and it allowed inflation to be tamed. The conquest of inflation has helped the economy in multiple ways, such as reducing interest rates and cutting effective tax rates, all of which have contributed powerfully to the stock-market boom. Against this salutary neglect must be set Rubin's opposition to tax cuts and his fealty to International Monetary Fund orthodoxy. The IMF has cajoled poor countries into adopting Rubin's worst policies (high taxes) while eschewing his best (hard money). Lawrence Summers is to be the new treasury

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By IVANA KHRUISCHEV
NR European Cruise Correspondent

NEW YORK, May 27—Officials at *National Review* announced today that only "a handful" of cabins remain in their allotment for the magazine's fast-approaching 1999 Baltic Cruise, which will visit a gaggle of glorious European cities this July 18-30 aboard Holland America Line's flagship, the MS *Rotterdam VI*.

Publisher Edward Capano said that "sales of cabins have far outpaced our wildest expectations, and there is still significant interest. Over 350 are joining us, and more are 'on the verge' of booking. Given the Cold War luminaries that will be traveling with Bill Buckley"—such as Caspar Weinberger, Alexander Haig, Ed Meese, Vernon Walters, William Clark, Richard Allen, James Buckley, John O'Sullivan, Kate O'Beirne, and Peter Rodman—"I guess we shouldn't be surprised by high demand."

At press time, only 10 cabins remained in reserve for the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise***, which will celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall. A major highlight of the voyage—which will visit the European ports of London, Olso, Stockholm, Berlin, St. Petersburg, Helsinki, Tallin, Arhus, Bornholm, and Copenhagen—is an exciting luxury tour of Germany's historic capital, which will include a stop at the Wall and the famous Check Point Charlie museum.

Staff at The Cruise Authority, the acclaimed travel agency handling yet another *NR* seafaring extravaganza, report that "we are still getting a number of inquiry calls every day about the *NR* cruise. Everyone who calls is asking 'can I still get the Berlin tour?'"

"The Berlin tour has proven to be so popular," said Capano, "that we've decided to extend our FREE offer of this amazing excursion"—a $400 value!—"to anyone else who signs up. We don't want to exclude anyone from a definite experience of a lifetime."

In addition to a luxury vacation, the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** features numerous extras and exclusives: seven seminars (each over two hours) starring Bill Buckley and a contingent of American "Cold War" heroes, three cocktail receptions (a great opportunity for schmoozing with our guests, and new-found friends), three late-night "smokers" ("they're a wonderful opportunity for relaxed socializing while enjoying world-class cigars," said Capano), and intimate dining with *NR* editors and celebrities.

"During the cruise, everyone will get to dine a few nights with *NR*'s editors and our special guests," said Capano. "I can't emphasize enough how very much people enjoy this."

Another cruise highlight will be the *Rotterdam*'s two-day visit to St. Petersburg. Among Holland America scheduled tours of this historic city are excursions to the Peter and Paul Fortress, Peterhof (the famed "Town of Palaces"), the renowned Winter Palace and Hermitage Museum (its 353 rooms are filled with masterpieces by Raphael, Titian, Michelangelo, Da Vinci, and others!), and the Pushkin Palace. Also available is a special "Moscow by Air" tour.

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secretary. Let us hope Rubin's successor understands his successes.

■ No pro-lifer sits on the National Bioethics Advisory Commission, so it comes as no surprise that its report will recommend federal funding of research that kills embryos. "We have moral obligations to the future health and welfare of people, and we need to balance these with, at the very least, the symbolic moral obligation we have to the embryo," explained Harold T. Shapiro, head of the commission and president of Princeton University. Somehow, liberal "balancing" always seems to entail conservative surrender of moral (and not merely "symbolic") positions. Research continues to suggest that scientists could obtain the medical knowledge we seek without the killing. But that knowledge would take a few extra years to develop—which is one compromise the pro-abortion crowd won't make. They've never been big on gestation.

■ The Clinton administration has launched an assault on the SAT and other standardized tests as criteria for college admission. Scores on such tests are good predictors of students' freshman-year performance. But to base admissions partly on any test that has a "disparate impact on members of any particular race, national origin, or sex" would be illegal, a civil-rights violation under proposed guidelines from the Department of Education. That covers pretty much all standardized tests, since black applicants, as a group, tend to do less well on them. Defenders of racial preferences have changed their strategy: If they can't have double standards, they'll have no standards at all.

■ Liberals are charging that the D.C. Court of Appeals is trying to turn back the constitutional clock 60 years. If only. The court rejected the EPA's proposed regulations on ozone and soot because the agency had taken such an expansive view of its discretion under the Clean Air Act that it was legislating. Legislating, of course, is a job for legislatures, a principle known in law as the "non-delegation doctrine," a doctrine that the Supreme Court has often ignored but never repudiated. Congress, however, has not defended this doctrine, because delegating its authority allows it to take credit for enacting popular wishes (such as clean air) without taking responsibility for potential unpopular consequences (such as bankrupt firms and higher local taxes). The appeals court has merely asked the EPA to see whether it can find any more guidance in the law for its decisions. But making Congress actually perform its duties will be a political task rather than a legal one—and a long and difficult one at that.

■ Citizens for the Constitution is a self-consciously bipartisan group that spans the range all the way from liberals such as Peter Edelman and Kathleen Sullivan to rock-ribbed conservatives such as Sheila Burke and Elliot Richardson. The group has issued "Guidelines for Constitutional Change" to

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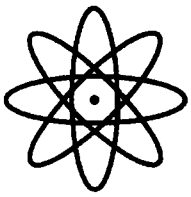

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protect us from the deluge of frivolous and dangerous constitutional amendments that keep being proposed. But the Constitution's own guidelines—amendments have to win the support of two-thirds of Congress and three-quarters of the states—seem to be working just fine: One amendment has passed in the last 27 years, and it was originally submitted in 1789. If anyone has been amending the Constitution too freely, it is the Supreme Court. But Citizens for the Constitution not only has no objections to the Court's amendments; its objection is precisely to attempts to overturn them. In an appendix to the guidelines, Professor Sullivan revealingly calls these attempts "mutiny against the authority of the Supreme Court." The Court's "interpretive latitude," she continues, "enables the Court to settle or at least defuse society's most ideologically charged disputes." Rest assured, gentle citizens: Your rulers are hard at work, defending their Constitution.

■ In a 5–4 decision, the Supreme Court has decided that sexual harassment by school kids is a civil-rights violation. School districts that are "deliberately indifferent" to it, wrote Sandra Day O'Connor in the majority opinion, can be held liable for unlimited money damages. In a sharply worded dissent, Justice Anthony Kennedy predicted that it would be impossible "to contain the flood of liability the Court today begins." But schools will try to protect themselves by strictly policing the dirty jokes, teasing, and personal comments that are characteristic of 10-year-olds. And they will have eager helpers: The decision is a jobs program for feminist lawyers. Unless Congress amends the law, workshops on sexual harassment may soon become as commonplace in America's schools as they are in America's offices.

■ Only after Benjamin Netanyahu was safely out of office did his enemies, here and in Israel, speak of the historic contribution he has made—bringing the Likud into the peace camp, thereby consolidating a national consensus on territorial partition, Palestinian sovereignty, and the terms of a secure peace. While in office, he was the target of unprecedented vilification, augmented by a duplicitous Clinton administration. But the administration's gloating should not be held against Ehud Barak, Netanyahu's successor as Israeli prime minister. Barak is a protégé of Yitzhak Rabin; he was Israel's most decorated soldier, a valorous commando leader and a brilliant chief of staff. On security matters he is more Scoop Jackson than George McGovern. His negotiating positions may turn out to be as tough as Netanyahu's—and he can call the Palestinians to account for outrageous behavior without being demonized as Netanyahu was. The PLO's latest stunt is to push, with Bill Clinton's indulgence, for the resurrection of the 1947 U.N. Partition Plan, which would take from Israel territory it possessed even before the 1967 war. Look for Barak to turn the tables on both Yasir Arafat and Bill Clinton.

■ Meg Greenfield, who died of cancer at 68 after twenty years as editorial-page editor of the *Washington Post*, once described her editorial board as having "the sensibility of 1950s liberals." That was not true, because liberals in the Fifties alternated between icy contempt for conservative ideas and refusal to acknowledge that they existed. While the *Post*'s editorials mostly hewed the liberal line, she assembled a truly eclectic stable of op-ed-page columnists, including George Will and Charles Krauthammer. Her intellectual fairmindedness was matched by her geniality. R.I.P.

■ Let's hope the nuclear technology that was transferred to China comes with a safety lock.

CHINA

Red Alert

THE report of the bipartisan Cox committee (see "Compromised," page 16) is as grim as its advance buildup had made it out to be—in what it says about our national security and what it says about the administration.

Theft has now given the Chinese, and their rogue-state clients, the advantage of 50 years of American research. In early spin, the White House claimed the spying was purely Platonic: No missiles had been developed. In fact, the Chinese are using stolen information to develop a mobile intercontinental ballistic missile, which, Air Force intelligence reported in 1996, "will be a significant threat not only to U.S. forces deployed in the Pacific theater, but to portions of the continental United States"—California, here we come—"and to many of our allies" in the Pacific. "The espionage," Rep. Chris Cox said, "continues . . . to this very day."

The administration comes out from the Cox committee looking very effective at two things: hobbling the committee's work and downplaying its conclusions. The administration subjected the report to months-long security checks and suppressed one third of its information. "Essentially the guts of the report were blacked out," said Cox. The White House used the tactic, successfully employed during the Whitewater and Lewinsky scandals, of preemptively leaking a summary of the findings in February in order to defang them. President Clinton has also been a fount of jesuitical parsings about whether information was stolen "from labs" (recall his assurance that he was never alone with Paula Jones "in a hotel"). His funny-money and sex scandals served him as training wheels, until he had to lie big time.

Most damnable is the administration's failure to deal with early signs of espionage. The spying, as the White House never tires of saying, went on under three administrations. But it was discovered in the first term of this one, and the Clintonites saw no evil. Janet Reno refused an FBI request to wiretap Wen Ho Lee, who let his fingers do the walking through our most secret lines of computer code. National Security Council chief Sandy Berger has equivocated about what the president knew, and when. The Justice Department flatly refused to give the Cox

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committee grand-jury testimony regarding leaks of satellite data from Hughes Electronics and Loral Space & Communications—with the result that we may have only half a picture of what has been lost. These failures have provoked bipartisan ire: Republican senator Richard Shelby said Reno should resign and "take her top lieutenants with her"; Democratic senator Robert Torricelli asked "whether or not it's in the national interest for her to continue." Reno and Berger should go, for starters.

But the source of all this monstrous carelessness is their boss. Bill Clinton undertook a China policy that was a parody of engagement—all carrots and no sticks, unrealistic about China's interests and our own. It was foreign policy for a world without superpowers. It benefited fat-cat Democratic friends (Loral's CEO, Bernard Schwartz, was the single largest Democratic-party donor in 1996); it also benefited the Clinton campaign and the president's legal-defense team (Webb Hubbell was tided over in part with Asian money). Which is worse: the possibility that Berger told Clinton at the earliest possible moment that there was spying and that he did nothing, or that Berger held off, knowing that Clinton would want to do nothing? Bill Clinton is not a traitor, nor is he corrupt in the narrow sense of giving up secret X for payment Y. He just wanted to let sleeping dragons lie. They weren't sleeping, though, and responsible presidents will have to deal with their handiwork.

KOSOVO

The Clinton Doctrine

BILL CLINTON'S military strategy has finally named itself. One White House official, speaking to the *New York Times*, called it the "anti-Powell doctrine." When Colin Powell was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he said that American troops should be sent into combat only when they had clear objectives and military means sufficient to achieve them. That is too old-think for the Clintonites, who evidently want to be able to use force when there are unclear objectives and insufficient means. Only such a rationale could explain the administration's strategy of pure air war, with even Apache helicopters sitting in Macedonia unused.

President Clinton says he is pleased with his accomplishment; in a *Times* op-ed piece, he declared that his Kosovo war plan "is working and will succeed in . . . restoring the Kosovars to their homes, with Serb forces out of Kosovo and the deployment of an international security force." But the fatuity of this estimate—the Kosovars are fleeing and dying, the Serb forces are staying put, and no international security force is in sight—prompted him to register a reservation: "I do not rule out other military options."

Military men who do not work for him are telling him the following: Milosevic "decides whether [the war] is working or not. He decides when he's had enough" (Gen. Powell). "Milosevic still has the initiative and until we get [it] away from him he will dictate the pace of settlement" (Gen. George Joulwan). "You need military forces on the ground . . . to reestablish security and stability" (Gen. John Galvin). So, two months after going to war, the administration has pressed for 50,000 NATO troops on Kosovo's border.

But now another irksome limiting factor, like objectives and means, presents itself: the weather. Summer has not arrived, but the interval during which a massive ground deployment could be effected, before autumn slows things down, is rapidly dwindling. This will give antsy allies (such as the Germans) even more reason to hold back. The White House has been waging the Kosovo war as though it were a primary campaign—all slogans, polls, and modern technology. Kosovars and soldiers will suffer from their learning curve.

AN APPROXIMATION

Winter is icumen in;
Loudly sing those who
Sweateth in the White House while
Bill Clinton goes coo-coo.
Albright bleateth chasing Cohen;
Berger bloweth red.
Back in blighty, Tony Blair
Insisteth, "Troops, instead."

—W. H. VON DREELE

GUNS

Self-Inflicted Wounds

KILLERS less determined than Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris can remove child-safety locks. The Senate's bipartisan vote to require that guns feature such locks was not a rational response to Littleton. It was not even a response to a major threat to children: Gun accidents kill fewer and fewer children every year, and far fewer children than drown in swimming pools. It is hard to resist the conclusion that the measure was advanced solely to inflict a symbolic defeat on pro-gun groups such as the NRA, the better to enact more stringent controls later. So also with the Democrats' Senate victory on mandatory background checks for private sales at gun shows. The next steps, telegraphed during the debate, are to regulate sales at pawn shops and flea markets and eventually all private sales, which will require universal gun registration.

Since the initial steps in this strategy are popular and innocuous, Republicans have not known how to respond (see "Target Practice," page 18). In the Senate—with no prompting from Texas governor George W. Bush, contrary to rumor—they adopted the practice, perfected in the elder Bush's administration, of taking the maximum heat for a conservative position

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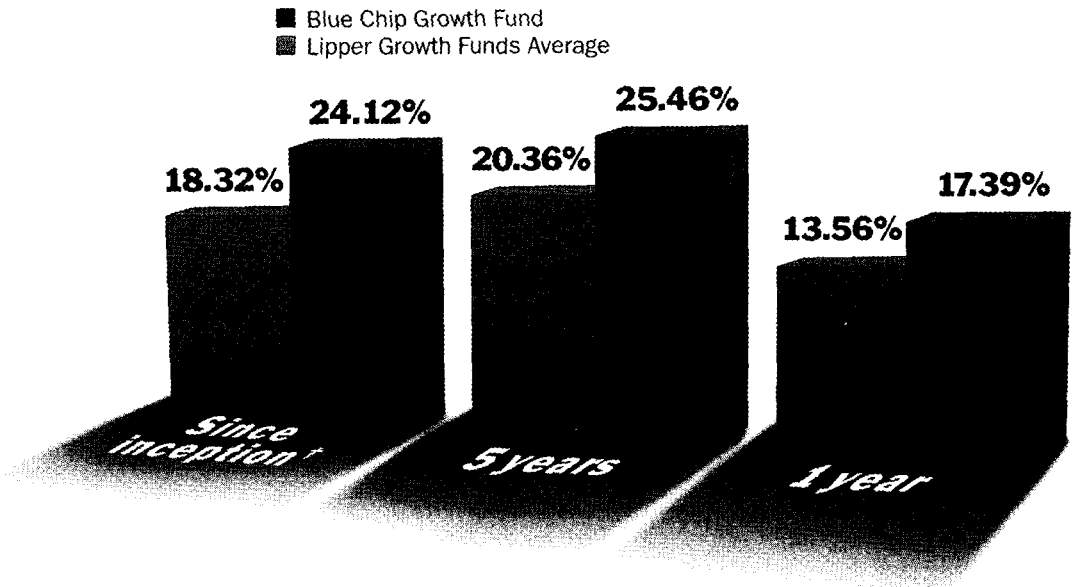

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before abandoning it. Already stalwart pro-gun senators, including vulnerable Republicans up for reelection in 2000 such as Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, are under pressure from pro-gun constituents who cannot fathom their tactical peregrinations.

But Democrats may find that they have lost in winning. The basic political mathematics of gun control remain fairly simple: The anti-gun side has the raw numbers but the pro-gun side has the intensity. In April, Missouri's Democratic governor, Mel Carnahan, defeated an NRA-sponsored ballot initiative to allow law-abiding citizens to carry concealed weapons. But a lot of rural Democrats who considered his twang a badge of conservatism have had their illusions shattered. Their hostility will hurt Carnahan's bid to unseat Republican senator John Ashcroft—and probably yield a conceal-carry law from the legislature in a few years.

Al Gore, who cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate on the gun-show crackdown, may have similarly alienated voters in the South and Rocky Mountain West whom New Democrats have been courting. Many of the factors working in favor of gun control now—public ignorance, an incremental strategy, a pliant media—were present also in 1994, when the administration succeeded in banning what it called "assault weapons." This modest victory arguably cost the Democrats a score of seats. If Republicans, and particularly their presidential nominee, stand firm—as they mostly did in 1994 and have been failing to do since—they will be able to mobilize gun owners. More gun control today, fewer liberals tomorrow.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ *Remarks by WFB at testimonial dinner for Sir David Frost, Museum of Television and Radio Artists, New York, April 28, 1999:*

My experiences with—Sir David Frost—go back to what I think of as the beginning of time, when he was about 23 years old. To be asked back then to do a session with David Frost was as unexpected as to be asked to pay your taxes but certainly more welcome: He was everywhere, questioning everyone. We had a very large go at it over many years and two things distill in my memory apart from his affability and intelligence.

The first was his schedule. I was feeling sorry for myself with the burden of one hour's interview every week on my own program. David was doing eight such, commuting across the Atlantic Ocean. Five in America, then three in London, week after week.

There was an indomitability there that had—I kept thinking—necessarily to fray his temper; but it never did, at least not when I was tuned in. Looking around for negative reactions I found only two. I learned that Henry Kissinger does not welcome his company, after what Dr. Kissinger thought an unfair probe. And then the ethereal Kitty Muggeridge, Malcolm Muggeridge's late wife, asked to comment on the volatility of David's career—once or twice one of his enterprises didn't actually succeed—said about him (and I can hear her saying it because I saw her often and loved her greatly), "David Frost was expected to sink without a trace, but instead he rose without a trace." Whatever his occasional disappearances, he was always omnipresent. That is a considerable metaphysical accomplishment. Imagine a week without Alistair Cooke on radio! Imagine a week without Henry Kissinger opining! Imagine, for the British, a week without David Frost questioning, soothing, provoking, nodding patiently, evidencing sometimes a trace of impatience, questioning everybody in the pantheon. Questioning who? *Everybody.* Well, come to think of it, I don't know that he ever did an interview with the Queen of England. Perhaps hers was a gesture of gratitude when, a few years ago, she lowered the sword on his shoulder.

Many in this room have sat at both ends of the table of interrogation. What won me over, very, very early, was the confidence David showed in letting his guest go in a chosen direction absolutely unplotted and even unforeseen. It is so easy to break it up, to say, "Well well, yes yes, but let's move to 1968, what did you think of—?" I remember a half dozen times when he'd ask a question, I'd essay an answer, find myself more interested than usual in my response, and burrow down a little deeper to pursue my thoughts.

What would David do? He would dive right down into the deep shaft of exploration and go spelunking happily with me, and sometimes it would be a whole minute or two—an eternity in television interviewing—before you'd come up for air.

David, last night, at home, I ran the hour interview you did with me in 1996, and I thought you much more fastidious than you used to be, in pulling up dates and past quotations and observing chronological road signs. Perhaps these are new requirements of yet another Frost format. But nobody can take from you your freshness. Who else would write a book titled, *How to Live Under Labour: Or, At Least Have as Much a Chance as Anybody Else*? Your autobiography, the first of an estimated three volumes, runs 500 pages. There are those who say there can't in your life *be* any new experiences. An interviewer wrote of David recently, having confronted his autobiography, "Unless in the next few years he achieves world peace through a television special, or he or a guest is assassinated during a live network talk show, Sir David Frost must have a fairly good idea of what a very early line, if not the first, of his obituary will be."

Well, if he does, he hasn't vouchsafed it to us. However it reads, those of you who survive him will be taken by the memory of a great public institution who made his life and ours fuller.

—WFB

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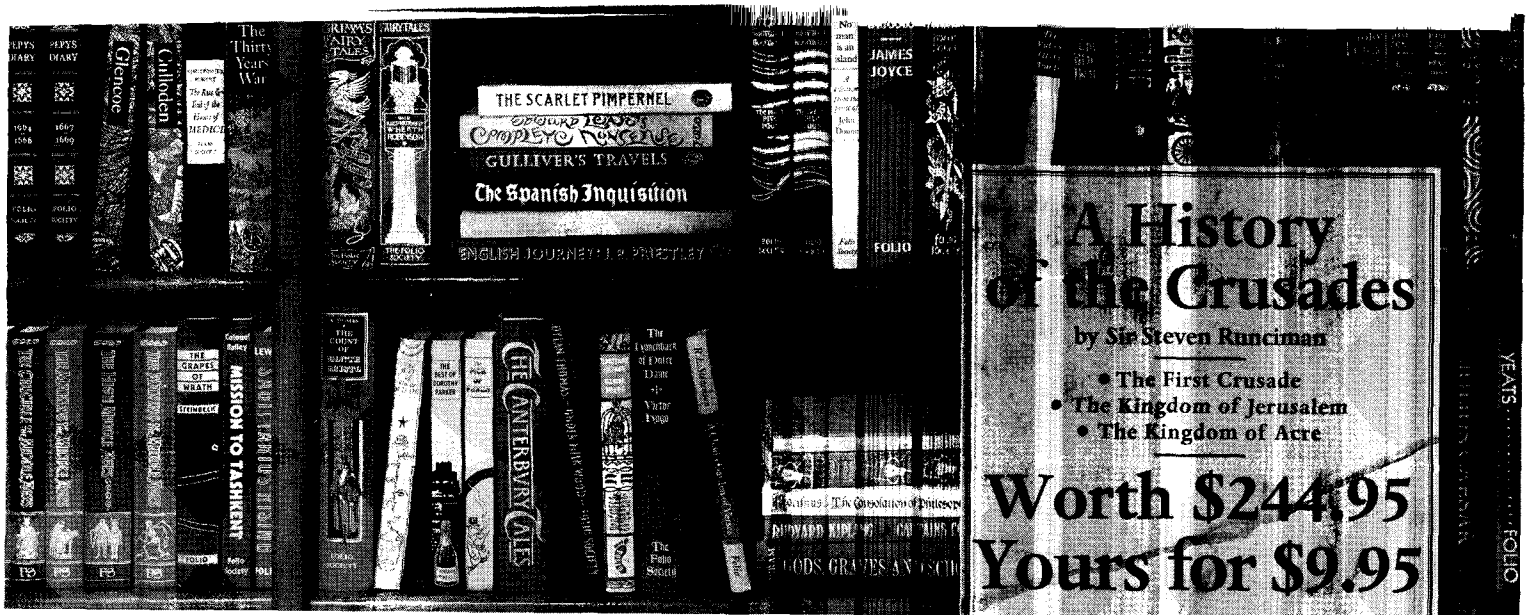

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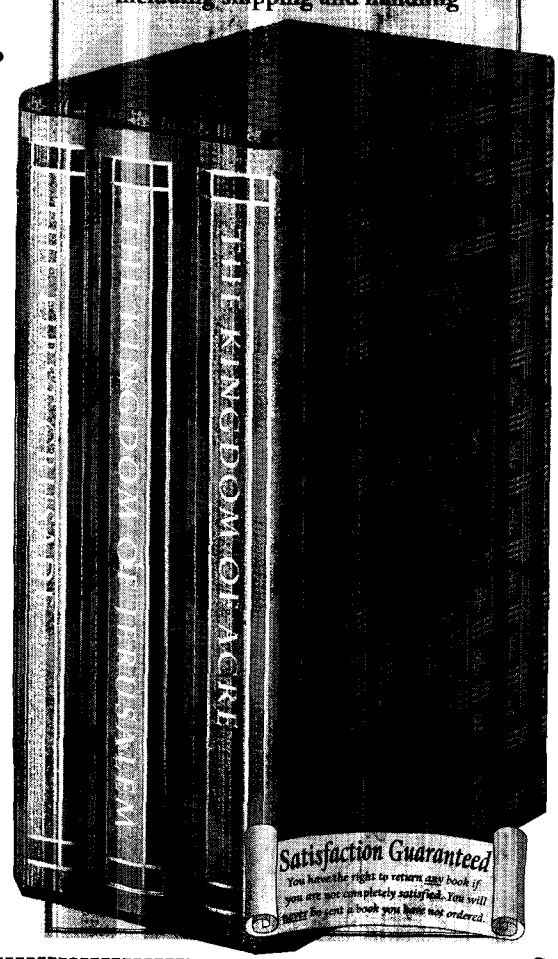
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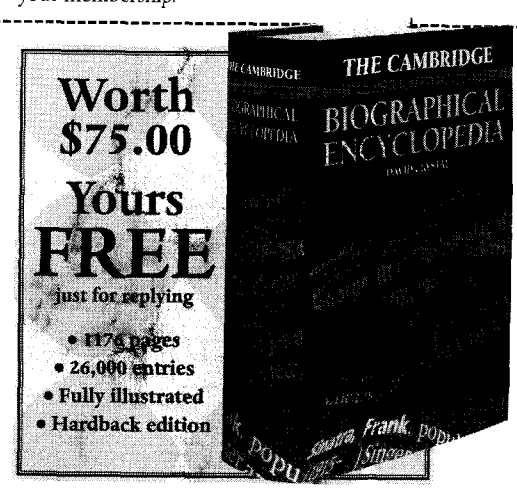

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■ CHINA ■

Compromised

The Year of the Sucker.

RICHARD LOWRY

Jiang Zemin by Roman Genn

In October 1998, an investigator with the House committee formed to look into Chinese espionage and acquisition of advanced U.S. technology questioned an official of Hughes Space and Communications, a California company. Had the corporation given China information to "improve" its rockets after one had blown up with a Hughes satellite on top of it? "Well," answered the official, "I'm not sure—'improve' is a difficult word." Only after several similar dodges would he admit that Hughes had indeed suggested improvements to China: "*If* they were actually improvements."

The report recently issued by the committee, headed by California Republican Chris Cox, makes clear that, after losing two satellites in Chinese launches, Hughes knew it had to make Chinese rockets more reliable and knew that such help was illegal without a State Department license. Its decision was easy. It handed China the technology, without a license.

The Cox report is a story of an open society and its enemy (or its "strategic partner"), a case study in how the last major Communist dictatorship has made liberal democracy and capitalism work for it. In China, all defense-related companies are subordinated to the military; in the United States, corporations strain to operate outside the minimal rules put in their way to protect the national security ("depends on what your definition of 'improve' is"). China charges almost all its official visitors to the U.S. (in 1996, some 80,000 came as part of various delegations) with information-gathering tasks, and is liable to enlist any of its citizens in its campaign to steal U.S. technology; Washington, meanwhile, refuses to wiretap a suspected spy working in a nuclear lab for fear of violating his rights.

Freedom and the rule of law of course have their security costs. But a vigilant government would work to minimize them. Instead of checking the heedless capitalist impulses of firms like Hughes, the Clinton administration has encouraged them—all has been subordinated to trade. Unrestrained commerce, coupled with the see-no-evil approach to fundraising that produced Trie, Chung, and Huang, dovetails with an old liberal tendency: to believe that national interests don't really diverge, that negotiation and cultural exchange (even at our nuclear labs) will smooth out any differences.

Energy Department security officer Notra Trulock testified before Congress that when he warned the administration about Chinese spying in 1995, his concerns were shrugged off as those of "a Cold War warrior." No McCarthyites here! (No racists, either—presumably among elements of the Clinton administration the loyalty of ethnic Chinese is automatically considered beyond reproach.) So the Chinese scored a series of intelligence coups that must make them think that in the United States it is perpetually the Year of the Sucker.

China's push to steal U.S. nuclear secrets began two decades ago in the wake of the Cultural Revolution (which hadn't done wonders for the advancement of physics and engineering). After seeing high-tech munitions in action in the Gulf War, the Chinese placed a renewed, ongoing emphasis on acquiring military technology. This, together with the newest revelations, puts a particularly shameful light on the Democratic uproar when Sen. Fred Thompson talked in 1997 of a Chinese "plan" to buy access and influence in the United States.

The most spectacular Chinese espionage successes have come in the U.S. nuclear labs. These have traditionally been run like college campuses, with security arrangements straight out of *Animal House*. China stole classified information on *every* currently deployed American warhead, a disgraceful record for which all recent administrations, as Democrats stress, share some blame. But the Clinton administration's unique contribution is that it *knew* what was happening and chose to try to ignore it and spin it away.

And the labs are just the beginning. The Chinese have pushed on all fronts. In joint ventures between Chinese and American firms, China often requires technology transfers as part of the deal. According to the Cox report, "The Communist Party has long believed that forcing technology from foreign firms is not only critical to the PRC, but also is a cost that foreign firms will bear in order to obtain PRC market entry." Right on both counts.

Such ventures potentially make for an identification of interests between the U.S. firms and the Chinese. This is what happened with Hughes and another satellite manufacturer (and provider of illicit information to the Chinese), Loral Space and Communications. Doing business with these firms gave the Chinese high-placed allies. In 1996, Loral chairman Bernard Schwartz was no less than the number-one Democratic donor. C. Michael Armstrong, former chief of Hughes, served as chairman of President Clinton's Export Council at the same time his company was illegally exporting rocket technology to China. Both men pushed to get export-licensing authority transferred from the State Department to the

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40	$ 153	$ 188	$ 200	$ 298	$ 300
45	$ 200	$ 210	$ 265	$ 400	$ 415
50	$ 260	$ 313	$ 400	$ 578	$ 608
55	$ 385	$ 440	$ 600	$ 956	$ 1,065
60	$ 535	$ 690	$ 865	$ 3,140	$ 3,140
65	$ 883	$ 1,015	$ 1,733	$ 4,100	$ 4,100
70	$1,430	$ 1,637	$ 3,035	$ 5,270	$ 7,220
75	$2,797	$ 4,770	$ 6,560	$10,370	$10,370

Male Premiums

Age	10 YEAR	15 YEAR	20 YEAR	25 YEAR	30 YEAR
35	$ 138	$ 163	$ 198	$ 280	$ 300
40	$ 185	$ 210	$ 260	$ 385	$ 383
45	$ 260	$ 335	$ 395	$ 548	$ 585
50	$ 378	$ 500	$ 600	$ 863	$ 915
55	$ 568	$ 758	$ 865	$ 1,805	$ 2,810
60	$ 908	$ 1,130	$ 1,365	$ 4,100	$ 4,100
65	$1,530	$ 1,845	$ 2,923	$ 5,270	$ 5,270
70	$2,665	$ 3,539	$ 5,405	$ 7,370	$10,070
75	$4,415	$ 7,848	$ 9,650	$13,640	$13,640

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more relaxed Commerce Department—an arrangement that suited everyone: The administration got its donations, the firms got their business, and the Chinese got their chance to filch U.S. technology.

The Chinese sought to weave many such tapestries, of dollars, business respectability, and political influence; it is here that the China fundraising and spying scandals meet. In a famous fundraising incident, Col. Liu Chaoying, the daughter of a Chinese politburo member and general, helped funnel $300,000 to Johnny Chung. According to the Cox report, "Col. Liu's payment to Johnny Chung was an attempt to better position her in the United States to acquire computer, missile, and satellite technologies."

Liu and Chung immediately set up a company, with the former designated the president. A shell company in America—a means to shuttle technology back to China—is a Chinese agent's answer to Wal-Mart. The Cox report identifies some 3,000 Chinese companies in the United States, many with links to Chinese army intelligence. Liu's dad himself was involved in dozens of companies in Hong Kong and in the West.

Liu met with the executive vice president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and representatives of the Securities and Exchange Commission. And, of course, she met Clinton at a DNC fundraiser. Wang Jun, son of the late Chinese vice president, also attended a coffee with President Clinton. Wang was connected to Charlie Trie, the former Little Rock restaurateur who, like small-time entrepreneur Johnny Chung, is a Horatio Alger of improper Chinese influence. In Bill Clinton's America, *anyone* can dream of one day helping a foreign agent meet the president of the United States.

It is also the genius of the Chinese effort that you don't have to be highly placed or a pro to help the cause. The Cox report states that "many of the most egregious losses of U.S. technology have resulted not from professional operatives under the control or direction of the [security services], but as part of commercial, scientific and academic interactions between the United States and the PRC." In a Chinese regime supposedly devoted to equality, this may be the purest manifestation of it—every man a spy.

The Cox report is a nightmare for liberal universalists, testament to the fact that even in the 1990s—even in the country "founded on an idea"—ethnicity matters. According to the report, China invites ethnic-Chinese employees of U.S. labs to China, "playing upon ethnic ties" and promising visits to ancestral homes and relatives. It worked in the case of Peter Lee, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Taiwan, who worked in the labs and has admitted to providing the Chinese classified research into detecting enemy submarines. "The PRC," says the report, "apparently co-opted Lee by appealing to his ego, his ethnicity, and his sense of self-importance as a scientist."

Against the energy and persistence of the Chinese, the Clinton administration adopted a true laissez-faire attitude—let the market sort it out. Take one area of high-tech exports: high-performance computers (HPCs). For the Chinese, they are crucial to capitalizing on (ill-gotten) nuclear information. In 1995, the administration pleased Silicon Valley by adopting a new policy for HPCs, whereby in some cases exporters were themselves responsible for determining whether they would need an export license. Naturally, exports of HPCs to China soared.

The rules were recently tightened thanks to pressure from Capitol Hill (particularly Sen. Thad Cochran's proliferation subcommittee). But the system is still lax. In June 1998, China and the U.S. reached an agreement for post-shipment checks to verify that imported computers haven't been diverted to military uses. Among its conditions: that verification requests may be denied, that Chinese ministries conduct them, that U.S. personnel may not attend unless invited, and that any inspection must occur within six months of a computer's arrival in China. As of last November, one (!) verification had taken place.

In short, when it comes to computers, the Clinton administration's posture is, "Trust, but don't verify." After a mention of the verification agreement, the Cox report notes that the administration determined that "no further description of the agreement may be included in this report" because "the PRC would object to making the terms of the agreement public." And what possible reason would the administration have for offending the Chinese? **NR**

■ **POLITICS** ■

Target Practice

A media gun show.

RAMESH PONNURU

If the public is outraged about loose gun laws after the Littleton massacre, politicians outside Washington haven't heard the news. Sure, the California assembly restricted gun purchases to one a month within 48 hours of the killings (which were planned for at least a year and involved four guns, but never mind). And efforts to crack down on gun shows in Oregon have accelerated. But most of the action in the states has been pro-gun.

In the weeks since Littleton, Arizona, Arkansas, and Nevada have prohibited cities from suing gunmakers for the costs of gun-related crime. Legislatures in Louisiana, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas have sent similar bans to governors who will certainly sign them. Also since Littleton, the Michigan house, by a two-to-one margin, has passed legislation to let citizens carry concealed weapons; it stands a good chance to become law.

Are these state legislatures "out of touch with the tides of public concern," as the *New York Times* editorialized about pro-gun forces in the nation's capital? No. Polls suggest the public disapproves of the municipal lawsuits. But that fact is getting washed away by the tide of media coverage of the public's supposed "outcry" and "uproar" against guns.

Actually, it's not clear that Littleton has changed public attitudes toward gun control much. True, polls show that large majorities of men and overwhelming majorities of women back gun locks, waiting periods, and the like. But that's been the case ever since polls started to ask about these topics. Karlyn Bowman, the American Enterprise Institute's pollwatcher, says that the biggest long-term change in public attitudes has been a slow and

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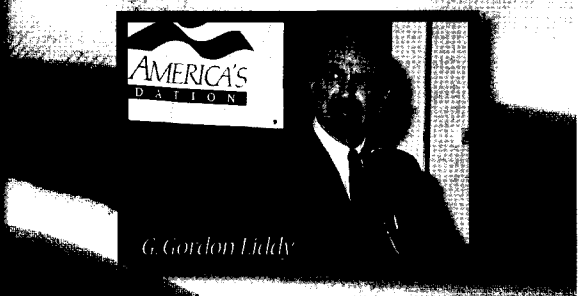

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steady erosion in support for a total ban on civilian handgun ownership: Gallup found 49–44 percent support for one in 1965 and 39–58 percent opposition post-Littleton.

Most people do not believe gun control will do much to reduce violent crime; they just consider the minor restrictions on offer unobjectionable, and possibly helpful. One sign of the shallowness of support for controls is that Democrats have a measly eight-point advantage in the ABC/*Washington Post* poll of which party the public trusts more to handle gun issues. The voters who actually cast their ballots on the issue, meanwhile, object to almost all controls. There's no evidence that has changed, either. As for the bogeyman of the NRA, in several polls more people view it favorably than view it unfavorably, even after Littleton.

In truth, the new "outcry" on which the press is reporting is its own. And even the public's longstanding support for some regulations is partly a result of abysmal reporting on basic facts about guns and federal law. When Elizabeth Dole came out against automatic weapons and assault weapons, nobody pointed out that automatic weapons have essentially been illegal since 1934 or that "assault weapons," a category invented by the gun-control lobby, are different only in appearance from other weapons.

The other change in the Beltway dynamics of gun control, besides self-fulfilling media spin, has been a shift in the strategy of gun-control groups. In the past, even when they pursued small-scale initiatives, their ultimate goal—a ban on civilian ownership of handguns—became clear. That's what happened during their push in 1993 and 1994 for waiting periods to buy guns (the Brady bill) and a ban on assault weapons. "They got cocky and pushed too hard on legislation and even more in rhetoric," says David Kopel, a law professor at New York University. "A lot of gun owners might not have minded the Brady bill within its four corners. But when they saw it was a deliberate strategy to change the culture, they said no." This provocation of gun owners was an important factor in the Democrats' loss of Congress in 1994, as even President Clinton has said.

The gun-control lobby no longer talks about banning handguns, only about keeping guns from criminals and children. The pro-gun coalition is left making the slippery-slope argument: Accept this tiny regulation, and eventually all guns will be outlawed. Now this is in fact what the gun-control lobby clearly hopes for, and some proposed regulations make sense only as way stations to a sweeping ban. But to most people, the slippery-slope argument sounds paranoid. So the anti-gun side achieves a strategic objective: making the NRA and its allies look first unreasonable

■

In truth, the new 'outcry' on which the press is reporting is its own.

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and then disreputable. And the Democrats achieve *their* objective: getting suburbanites to associate the GOP with people for whom they feel no cultural affinity.

Republicans are playing right along with this strategy. The surest way to make an issue or an ally an embarrassment to oneself is to act embarrassed by it. This is what Georgia Republicans are doing by trying to rescind a speaking invitation to NRA official Wayne LaPierre. Since they are not converting to the gun-control side en masse, the main effect is to suggest that these Republicans have something to be embarrassed about. Still more harmful to the party is Mrs. Dole's insinuation that her rivals for the presidential nomination are bowing to "special interests," namely the NRA.

But for a case study in Republican incompetence, one need only look at the mid-May gunfight in the Senate. The first mistake was majority leader Trent Lott's decision to schedule a juvenile-justice bill for consideration so soon after Littleton—a capitulation to Democrats who had threatened to tie gun controls to every other piece of legislation if he didn't—and to do so without specifying how long, and under what rules, it would be considered.

The next mistake came when Democrats made an issue of gun shows, where criminals were supposedly getting guns from private parties without going through background checks. Republicans offered an amendment to let anyone selling guns at a show, and not just professional dealers, perform background checks. Thus Republicans essentially conceded the Democrats' picture of gun shows—venues where shady figures can pass guns under the table to criminals and psychos—without offering a solution.

And (mistake #3) the Senate's schedule forced this amendment to be written and voted on quickly, before Republicans could discuss it at any meetings. Some senators misunderstood the content of the amendment, let alone the political context, when they voted both to pass it and to kill the Democratic proposal. The press coverage of the votes the next day was scathing, and Bill Clinton and Janet Reno made the most of it. Republicans looked unreasonable.

One would have thought the thing to do in this situation was to press the accelerator and leave the scene. It wasn't as though angry citizens were jamming the phone lines. But the bad press agitated Republicans Gordon Smith of Oregon and John McCain of Arizona, who took to the airwaves to denounce what they had done just the day before and to demand a new vote—mistake #4. ("Smith was practically crying," recalls a Senate staffer.) Republicans had to come up with their own proposal for mandatory background checks at gun shows. And they didn't even cave in credibly, since the amendment sponsor was Larry Craig, an NRA board member (#5).

The news stories the next day were even worse, and more prominent. The *Washington Post* said Republicans had reversed themselves because they were "stunned" by the "uproar" over their votes—and reported that Democrats rejected their new proposal as "still crammed with loopholes." Republicans now looked weak, unprincipled, incompetent, and out of touch, as well as extreme.

Democrats were of course emboldened. Their leaders' initial reaction to Littleton had been remarkably cautious—South Dakota senator Tom Daschle said gun control was not the answer, and Missouri representative Dick Gephardt did not push the issue—perhaps because their home states are socially conservative, perhaps because they remember how much gun control cost them in 1994. But if pro-gun voters were going to stay home in disgust at wayward Republicans, Democrats could exploit the issue without cost.

So Democrats spent another week denouncing supposed outrages such as the "pawn-shop loophole," which let customers get their *own* guns back without a

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background check. Next came the "flea-market loophole." When it became clear that Democrats were more interested in scoring points than in passing law, some Republicans wanted Lott to pull the juvenile-justice bill from the floor. He did not (#6), partly because judiciary committee chairman Orrin Hatch had worked on the bill for years and wanted it to pass.

Smith and McCain successfully demanded that Republicans accede to the pawn-shop crackdown. But most Republicans, including those two, finally drew the line at a Democratic proposal aimed mainly at harassing gun shows—a proposal that passed amid the theater of Al Gore breaking a tie vote.

The Republicans didn't look very attractive to the public during these wranglings. But grassroots pro-gunners are downright angry at the GOP, which in their view has conceded that they are to blame for Littleton, and they are going to remember the month of May 1999 much longer. Already stalwart pro-gun senators are taking heat from some constituents. But if pro-gun voters can be convinced Republicans are on their side, as in 1994, the issue might yet help the GOP on balance.

A lot depends on what Republicans do now. One option is to pick up the NRA's argument that the administration has been scandalously lax in enforcing existing gun laws. That would fit with the broader Republican theme that Clinton is more interested in press conferences and signing ceremonies, in spin and sizzle, than in follow-through or executing laws. And it beats just being buffeted by events and reacting to Democrats.

The early signs in the House aren't encouraging. The Republican leadership talks about enforcement, but has also endorsed the outlines of the Senate gun-control provisions. Speaker Denny Hastert favors raising the age at which adults can purchase guns from 18 to 21. It's okay for 18-year-olds to own or use a gun, says John Feehery, a spokesman for the Speaker, just not to purchase one. What about pawn shops and flea markets? "Obviously we want to make sure there are no loopholes," says Feehery. What if Democrats try to close "loopholes" by counting more guns as illegal "assault weapons"? "We have not addressed that at all. We're trying to focus on children."

Uh-oh. NR

■ CAMPAIGN 2000 ■

Amateur Hour

Where did all the politicians go?

RICHARD BROOKHISER

At the 1936 Democratic convention, H. L. Mencken turned to the novelist James T. Farrell and gestured at the bleating herd on the podium. "Do you see all of those politicians up there?" Mencken asked. "Every one of them thinks he can be president of the United States." Now every nonpolitician thinks he can be president too—particularly in the Republican party. The GOP has taken the Americans with Disabilities Act to its logical conclusion: People who don't know anything can work in the Oval Office. This is bad for the GOP, for conservatives, and for the country.

Half the field of Republican candidates for the 2000 presidential nomination are nonpoliticians. As of now, the pols include a governor (Bush) two senators (McCain, Smith), a former congressman and vice president (Quayle), and a former governor (Alexander). The non-pols are a pundit (Buchanan), a publisher (Forbes), a politician's wife (Dole), and two conservative operatives (Bauer, Keyes). It's as if the party had taken out a help-wanted ad: "TOP EXECUTIVE POSITION: Rule world, lead party. Benefits: Substantial. Experience: None."

The novices do have a neighborly acquaintance with politicking and power. Pat Buchanan, their elder statesman, has plied his verbal skills in two White Houses, during three decades. The rest filled appointive slots in the Reagan administration, from cabinet level (Elizabeth Dole) to gofer level (Gary Bauer). But they have failed—or better, not taken—the ultimate tests of politics: They have never won an election; and they have never been responsible to their constituents afterwards.

Those who have run for president before (Buchanan and Forbes) would have us believe that running and losing is a form of substitute experience. But it only gives them experience as campaigners. Nothing succeeds like success, and nothing tests like it either. Nor is proximity to power the same thing as holding it, with the support (and under the judgment) of the voters who put you there. The non-pols can all claim to have been present, like Dean Acheson, at a variety of Washington creations. But they have not been creators. The buck always stopped elsewhere. That is why Harry Truman's face looks out from historic paper place mats, not Acheson's.

With one category of exceptions, every American president has had elective political experience. So has almost every losing candidate of a major party. The great exception that Americans make is, of course, for officers—partly because the first officer-president, George Washington, set such a good example; mainly because officers, who send men to kill and die, have such a grave responsibility (though it too is under the authority of the elected office-holders who declare and wage war). But even several of the officer-presidents had political experience. Washington spent 16 years in the Virginia House of Burgesses before the Continental Congress picked him to be commander in chief: a lesson in patience that served him well during the screwups and scheming of the war.

Not having held elective office deprives the nonpolitician candidates of an essential skill. When Dwight Eisenhower was about to succeed him, Truman snappishly remarked that "poor Ike" would think of the White House as the Army: He would sit at his desk saying, "Do this" and "Do that," and nothing would happen. Ike, it turned out, was a good politician; after all, coalition warfare—juggling Patton, Montgomery, Churchill, and Roosevelt—had been apt training. Eisenhower was also lucky to have had the gift: Who knew? But Truman's point survives the occasion that prompted it. No one can test-drive the Oval Office. He can, however, practice by operating smaller offices.

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The lack of a political r cord also deprives us, the voters, of a necessary measure of judging candidate . How do we know what the nonpolitic ins would do in office? We know what ey tell us they will do. But how do we know whether they will stand by what they say? Our doubt arises less fro n the fear of conscious deceit than fron recognizing that every man has a ch racteristic way of responding to the p ssures of power. Pat Buchanan was a sp echwriter for Richard Nixon and Rona l Reagan. So, which man would he em late? The one who asked Gorbachev to ear down the Berlin Wall or the one w o toasted Mao Tse-tung? The one who ppointed Justice Scalia or the one who ppointed Justice Blackmun? A record f his own would give us a clue.

Partisans of the non-pols, f course, might say that they don't e ect their candidates to win; they only w nt to cast a ballot to register a convicti n, and no politician registers their con ctions so well. Then the gloomster tec nophobes are truly right, and televisic and the Internet have drained realit from the most important arena in publ life. It is ironic that conservatives sho ld be the apostles of the virtual and the as-if.

In fairness, we were not t e first to yield to the apolitical tempta ion. That honor belongs to the Democ tic party, when Jesse Jackson first ran for president in 1984. Because he wa black, he got away with it (although af r he won the Michigan caucuses in 19 , George Will did throw him a beanba question about GATT). Then Pat obertson offered himself to the GOP. Since the religious Right were blacks or most conservatives—i.e., uncrit izable totems—he too got away w th it. Then the country at large suc-cumbed. If Ross Perot had not deserted then reentered e 1992 race, he might have wo . Colin Powell's triumphal bo tour for My *American Journ* was the apotheosis of apolitic presidential politics. A January 1995 *Times-Mirror* poll, which broke the electorate into ten socioeconomic and temperamental groups (e.g., Depressed Poor; White Evangelical), found that his rock-bottom approval rating in any group was in the mid-80s.

Powell at least had an Officers' Exemption. But once you surrender standards, it is easy to slip all the way. Of the politicians in the GOP's 2000 race, only Sen. Smith, by virtue of representing a small state for a short time, courts risibility. But three of the non-pols are grotesque even by the norms of their caste. Elizabeth Dole, our very own Hillary Clinton, is a symptom of the Praetorianization of the presidency—extending honor and power to spouses, family members, and anyone else near the throne. Even wives of failed candidates now merit respect, even as wives of powerful senators merit cabinet posts. Gary Bauer hopes to extend honor and power to people who are quite far from the throne—pages and cupbearers. Alan Keyes is our very own Mussolini. If you ever heard him speak, you are still suffering from tinnitus. That such people aspire to lead a major party, much less a nation greater than Belize, is a scandal. Pat Buchanan and Steve Forbes are men of intelligence, conviction, and considerable rhetorical skill. (Forbes's skill is not having any skill.) But they are simply in the wrong line of work.

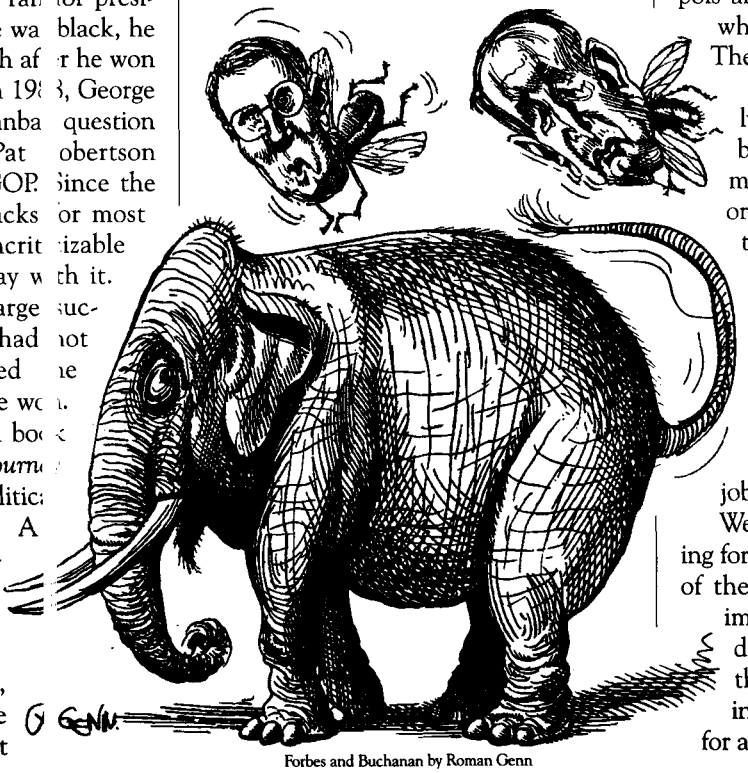
If you ever heard Alan Keyes speak, you are still suffering from tinnitus.

The source of the apolitical temptation lies deep in the American mind, put there by an 18th-century Englishman, Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, our forgotten founding father. A journalist when he was out of office, which was most of the time, Bolingbroke formulated the idea of the Patriot King—a sovereign above parties, who would rebuke the political classes for the good of the nation. Bolingbroke probably did not believe his own nonsense—he was furiously spinning to get back into office—but he made a huge impression in colonial America (John Adams and Thomas Jefferson admired him). We got rid of the king, but the fantasy of the Patriot King goes marching on.

Another Bolingbroke legacy, which is the necessary background to the Patriot King, is the Paranoid Style. Richard Hofstadter's famous essay, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," begins with the Populist money cranks of the Gilded Age and so misses half the story. The vision of a corrupt all-powerful clique—whether bankers, slaveowners, or Tories—runs through American politics from the beginning. Professional pols always figured among the villains, whether as dupes or ringleaders. They are the Patriot King's foil.

Conservatives today are especially hospitable to these old dramas because we have been fighting the modern state—utopian, socialist, or therapeutic. But the badness of the modern state does not argue for the badness of the state per se, or of politicians as a class. Politics is a job. Many politicians do it badly, but that only means we have to keep trying to encourage better ones. If you hire a plumber who does a bad job, you don't call in your sister.

We especially don't want to go looking for nonpoliticians now, when the job of the presidency has become all but impossible. The attention is maddening, the effort is life-shortening, the power is by turns godlike and inconsequential. An awful mix. Not for amateurs. **NR**



Forbes and Buchanan by Roman Genn

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■ CAMPAIGN 2000 II ■

Terrible Tony

Al Gore turns to an affable thug.

JAY NORDLINGER

PRESIDENT REAGAN had not had a good first debate against Walter Mondale in 1984. Tony Coelho, the slashing House Democrat from California, wasn't about to let that go. Reagan had "looked old and acted old," he told the press. How old, exactly? "Well," said Coelho, "he didn't quite drool."

The next day, under attack from his Republican colleagues on the House floor, Coelho explained himself, as only he could. "I rose to the *defense* of the president," he protested. "I said he *wasn't* drooling."

That's the legendary Tony C.: partisan, aggressive, harsh, mischievous, sort of fun, and in love with the game of politics.

And that is the man whom Al Gore has tapped to run his presidential campaign. Gore turned to Coelho in the second week of May, worried, it seems, that his campaign was faltering. Bill Bradley was biting at his heels, and George W. Bush was creaming him in polls all across the country. Tipper Gore, too, was concerned, having waited too long to be First Lady to see it slip away through a lack of political discipline. So Tony it was, baggage and all.

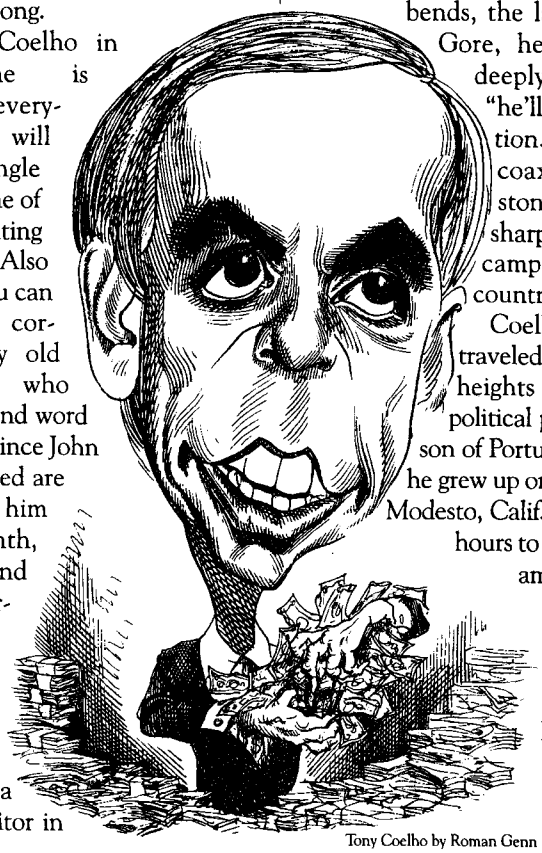
And what baggage. Coelho is the father of the vast and ethics-flouting Democratic money machine that has, from time to time, landed Bill Clinton and his vice president in hot water. As boss of his party's Congressional Campaign Committee in the 1980s, Coelho set a new standard in fundraising and strongarming, becoming the very model of a political shakedown artist. He made the party rich, but in 1989 was forced to leave the House under a cloud of financial scandal. Thereafter, he concentrated on making himself rich, earning piles and piles at a New York investment firm, trading on his countless connections, keeping a hand in politics, exuding his typical joy. Coelho is a happy warrior, in all he undertakes.

You might think Al Gore would hold an infamous bagman at arm's length. After all, this is the vice president of Buddhist temples, dialing-for-dollars, and "no controlling legal authority." But Gore, perhaps recognizing a kindred spirit, has clasped him to his bosom. The two men indeed have much in common, including a taste for unusually vicious rhetoric. Each inveighs against conservatives as though they were not merely political opponents but enemies of man. Coelho was notorious for his broadsides against Reagan all those years ago; Gore, despite his strange reputation for temperance, can hardly draw a breath without denouncing the other side as "extremist." In 1994, in one of his ugliest remarks, the vice president referred to supporters of Oliver North in Virginia as "the extra-chromosome right wing." Gore and Coelho may not win, but they will surely get along.

Ask about Coelho in Washington—he is "Tony" to everybody—and you will receive a single answer: He is one of the most fascinating men in politics. Also a good Joe, if you can swallow a little corruption. Crusty old Republicans who haven't had a kind word for a Democrat since John Connally switched are quick to praise him for his warmth, intelligence, and generosity. A former adversary in the House GOP leadership says, "Tony is a very likable guy. And you won't find a tougher competitor in all of politics." What's more, "he wouldn't hesitate to make a contact for you in business or something like that." Another ex-GOP leader, Bill Paxon, describes the enlistment of Coelho as "the first truly smart move the Gore campaign has made this year. He's so damn good."

Chris Matthews, the columnist and TV host who once served as Speaker Tip O'Neill's top lieutenant, calls Coelho "an incandescent political animal." He "loves it," says Matthews. "He wants the Democrats to win, but he has friends in every part of the world, and he has a life outside the Democratic party." Among the press, Coelho—in contrast to his partners in the Gore camp—is known as particularly gracious, the type who will look you in the eye and refuse to be distracted until your interview is over. His press is often galled by what he gets away with, but admiring all the same.

A political analyst who has known Coelho from the beginning sums him up this way: He is "a very savvy pol, very conniving, as tough and mean-spirited as James Carville, and even smarter." He is "a gangster figure, in a way"—an "honorable gangster, who will keep his word to you even as he breaks, or at least bends, the law." And, unlike Gore, he does not have deeply held beliefs; "he'll talk for any position." Rather, he can coax money from a stone and throws the sharpest elbows of any campaigner in the country.



Tony Coelho by Roman Genn

Coelho, now 57, has traveled a long way to the heights of financial and political power. The grandson of Portuguese immigrants, he grew up on a dairy farm near Modesto, Calif., rising in the wee hours to milk the cows. His ambition was to be a priest, but an illness, epilepsy, blocked his way. It also estranged him from his parents, who regarded his condition as a

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sign of divine disfavor. The you ıg man subsequently channeled his mazing energy into politics—a good tl ng, his mother would reportedly quip, ecause "I knew he'd become one of th e fool-ing-around priests."

In 1965, Coelho went to Was ington to work for his congressman; 3 years later, he succeeded him. His ris in the House was spectacular. After single term, he was elected chairma of the campaign committee, formerly a snoozy, decorous entity, which Coelho turned into a juggernaut. His modus o erandi was to say to the nation's bus nesses, Look: We, the Democrats, are oing to be in control for the foreseeabl future, so fork it over, or suffer the le slative consequences. Coelho was, a Chris Matthews puts it, "the ramrod of the House Democrats, enforcing pa y unity and beating back what was know as the Reagan revolution.

And all the while, he delig ted in taking after Reagan, positively s vaging him. He seemed to live for, as e liked to say, "putting a few scratches on the "Teflon president." If Coelho id not invent the term "sleaze factor" -a ref-erence to the number of I eagan-administration officials accused of ethical wrongdoing—he did as much as anyone to peddle the notion. And he railed incessantly against Reagan's strategy of arming the Nicaraguan contras against the ruling Sandinistas. Reagan and his men "don't want peace," he declared. "They don't want democracy. They want the contras in charge . . . because that's what the right wing wants." To Coelho, the conflict in Nicaragua was simply "the Reagan war."

George Bush, he liked slightly better. He saw the Gipper's successor as someone "who wears cowboy boots over argyle socks" (a rather neat description of the Bush persona, actually). At the 1988 convention, he proclaimed, "The history of the Reagan-Bush defense policy can be written with a toilet seat in one hand and a subpoena in the other."

The next year, however, Coelho's luck ran out: He was hoist by his own ethical problems, prominently one involving an audacious loan from an S&L crony, used to invest in a junk bond. He was also one of the most shameless check bouncers in a ram-bunctiously check-bouncing Congress. Coelho, unlike his close ally Speaker Jim Wright, skipped town a few steps ahead of the law, not waiting for the Ethics Committee to disgrace him. He explained on *MacNeil-Lehrer*, "I understand politics, and I understand what the Republicans would do with [the situation]. Nothing negative about that. I happen to like partisan politics."

More than landing on his feet, Coelho became a managing director of Wertheim Schroder & Co. He also joined more corporate boards than Gerald Ford can shake a stick at. But, naturally, he didn't quite purge politics from his system. In 1990, in a nice instance of foreshadowing, he told *National Journal*, "I would be interested in managing a presidential campaign if I had the time." In 1994, when his party faced disaster at the polls, he was called in as a "senior advisor" to the Democratic National Committee. His job, again, was to be "the hit man," as he had once exulted. But in '94, it was Coelho and the Democrats who were hit, losing their majority in the House for the first time in 40 years.

So the Al & Tony Show it will be. Gore and Coelho, more than people yet realize, are birds of a feather. Each takes no prisoners and would do almost anything for the cause. Coelho will soon be one of the media's favorite dispensers of soundbites, and those bites will be severe. In the opinion of an old Coelho rival, "Gore, for all his vitriol and drive, is not in the same league as Tony in terms of tough singlemindedness." In 1995, the vice president cried, "The Republican leadership is conducting a jihad against the environment in the most right-wing, extremist agenda we have seen in America in this century." Coelho speaks that same language, only more fluently, with even greater abandon.

Moreover, as Chris Matthews observes, "Tony is still hungry. And it's not often that you find someone who is both experienced and hungry, someone who is comfortably off yet still raring to go out and be gladitorial. We almost never have second acts in our politics. These guys make their names in Washington, then go off and make money. They don't come back."

Tony C., though, is back. In a big way. **NR**

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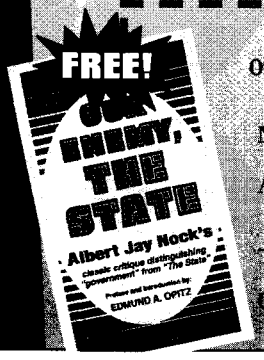

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■ THE HILL ■

Congressboy

Patrick Kennedy tr es to grow up.

JOHN J. MILLER

WHEN Patrick J. Kennedy rst ran for political office, in 1 '88, he spent at least $94,000 to captu : 1,324 votes—about $71 apiece. He w a seat in the Rhode Island state legis ture, a job that paid $300 per year, by b ating a ten-year Democratic incumbent 'These races usually don't cost mo than $6,000," says Brown University olitical scientist Darrell West. "Kenned 's continues to be the most expensive n state legislative history."

Kennedy was a 21-year-olc Providence College junior at the time and his early political success only burni ied the image of the Kennedy clan. Me a from around the country charted l trick's rise. After he won election to C ngress in 1994, many thought it was onl a matter of time before this prodigy f llowed his father, Ted, into the Senate. ecause the Constitution requires senat s to be at least 30, all Kennedy neede to do was grow up. Republican senat r John Chafee's term was set to expire 2000, the year of Kennedy's 33rd birtl lay. So before Kennedy was even swor in as a member of Congress, the traje ory of his career appeared certain.

But when Chafee announ ed his retirement in March, Kennedy nsisted that he would stay put and fc go the opportunity to enter the cha ber in which his father and uncles bu t their careers. "It could be another 2 + years before there's an open seat," Rhode Island senator Jack Reed, a De ocrat, opined to the *Boston Globe*. Ken dy has decided, at least for the time b ing, to cast his lot in the House, where he has not yet made much of an impac . "He's irrelevant," sniffs one Democrati staffer.

But not necessarily. Last fall, r inority leader Dick Gephardt tapped Kennedy to become head of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the party's fifth-ranking leadership post and the one chiefly responsible for candidate recruitment and fundraising. Now "Congressboy," as one Providence radio host dubbed him, is being taken seriously. If the Democrats capture the House in 2000, Kennedy will be seen as a big reason why. In fact, a victory would catapult him even higher in the Democratic hierarchy, perhaps even putting him in position to succeed Gephardt sometime in the next decade. The country may not see another President Kennedy; but how about a Speaker Kennedy?

Kennedy doesn't deny that he owes his meteoric rise almost entirely to his family name. When he first ran for Congress, his father, who was running for his own reelection, drenched the Providence media market, which includes southern Massachusetts, with campaign commercials that emphasized the "Kennedy" rather than the "Ted." Since then, Patrick has become one of the most requested speakers on the Democratic dinner circuit—a sort of hand-me-down version of Camelot. As a bachelor in a safe seat, he has the freedom to travel the country in a constant search for dollars. In 1996, in fact, Kennedy twice visited the Buddhist temple made infamous by Al Gore. Last year, he raked in about $1.5 million for Democratic House candidates. And this September, he will host the DCCC's $100,000 donors at the Kennedy compound in Hyannis Port.

It wasn't always obvious that Kennedy would find success in politics. In his senior year of high school at Phillips Academy, he checked into a drug and alcohol clinic. That bit of news became public during the brouhaha surrounding the William Kennedy Smith rape trial, when Patrick ran into further bad publicity for his participation in midnight revels. What's more, Kennedy's quickness has been called into question. He uses cheat sheets during press conferences on House races, when a pol in his position ought really to commit such things to memory. "He's smarter than Joe, but not by much," says one GOP aide, referring to Kennedy's cousin, who retired from Congress last year after an abortive run for Massachusetts governor.

Today, Patrick's bad habits seem a thing of the past, thanks in part to a powerful mentor. Gephardt has long had an interest in his young colleague, and Kennedy is widely regarded as the minority leader's protégé. They operate a joint political action committee and make frequent campaign appearances together.

Democrats report that Kennedy is well liked by his colleagues, even if he has a temper. Kennedy has picketed Sen. Chafee's district office on more than one occasion, a weird breach of decorum for a state with so small a congressional delegation. He also gets into shouting matches with Republicans routinely, especially when his family name is involved. In December, he started hollering at Rep. Bob Barr of Georgia after Barr referred to President Kennedy in a speech supporting impeachment. Three years ago, Kennedy and former representative Gerald Solomon of New York exchanged heated words when Kennedy conjured the ghosts of his dead uncles during a gun-control debate. "Families like mine know all too well what the damage of weapons can do. My God, all I have to say to you is, play with the devil, die with the devil," Kennedy said. This was simply too much for Solomon.

Patrick Kennedy by Roman Genn

Family loyalty also has inspired one of Kennedy's rare breaks with the Left: He happens to be a hardliner on Cuba. His strong anti-Castro views are informed, he admits, by a suspicion that the dictator had a hand in the assassination of his uncle.

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In 1996, when Cuba shot down a pair of civilian planes piloted by Cuban-American protesters, Kennedy suggested that the United States respond with a blockade.

Apart from his anti-Castro bent, and occasional support for increased defense spending (there is a large naval presence in his district), Kennedy is a conventional liberal. He never hesitates to attack Republican tax cuts as being "for the rich." Even so, he recently introduced a bill to provide a 20 percent tax credit to people who buy U.S.-built boats more than 50 feet long. Kennedy says his intention is to help create jobs for blue-collar workers in his district. Trickle-down economics, anyone?

On social issues, Kennedy can be as much a firebrand as his father, but without the Boston accent. Three years ago, he announced that the Catholic Church ought to ordain women as priests. "I hope in the near term the Church crawls out of the Stone Age," he said. He later apologized for the remark. In a speech earlier this year, Kennedy linked the horrific truck-dragging death of James Byrd Jr., a black man murdered by white racists in Texas, to the GOP Congress. "You know how this hate happens?" he asked. "It's because people are given a green light, and society condones this stuff."

That kind of rhetoric is what makes Kennedy so disliked by Republicans. And it may also be the secret reason he isn't running for Senate. He polarizes voters. "There are lots of little old ladies with shrines to JFK in his district," says Providence businessman Dan Pineau. Yet for every devotee, there is a detractor. Brown University polling shows that Kennedy elicits strong reactions, both positive and negative. Democratic representative Bob Weygand has declared his candidacy for Senate, and it's not obvious that Kennedy would beat him in a primary. Then there's the general election, which will probably see the Democrat square off against Sen. Chafee's son, Warwick mayor Lincoln Chafee.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee may yet punch Kennedy's ticket for the future. But given the choice between a risky race and coasting on the momentum of his inherited political legacy, he has opted for the latter. And why not? It's worked so far. **NR**

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■ KOSOVO ■

A Lovely War

How Clinton & Blair d eam.

JOHN O'SULLIVA N

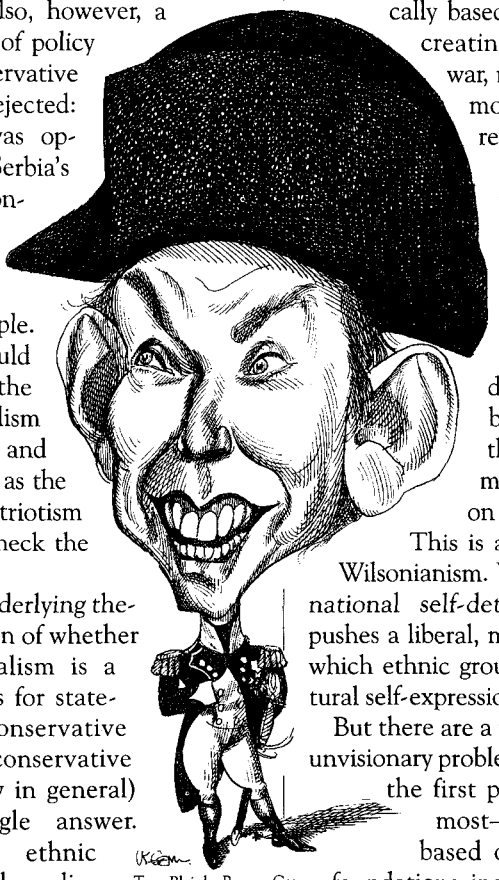
Oh, oh, oh it's a lovely war, b gins the old verse. Ever since the Kosovo intervention started, commenta rs have noted that this is a liberal war. l s methods, for instance, are those pion ered by Presidents Kennedy and Joh son in Vietnam—"graduated escalatio and all that. It also has a liberal aim—t protect the Kosovar Albanians from 'ethnic cleansing"—that is quite unta ited by any selfish U.S. or Western inter t. And, finally and conclusively, its meth ds have completely undermined its air s, since graduated escalation has allowe Serbian forces ample time to empty K sovo of ethnic Albanians. Q.E.D.

NATO's intervention certainl did not have to follow this course. Sin e Milosevic had already sent force against Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia, ie West might reasonably have decided t at curbing his capacity to cause tr ible at NATO's backdoor was a l itimate strategic aim. Acting on that ogic, it would then have recognized Ko ovo as a state that had been entitled to laim its independence when the form r Yugoslavia broke up but had been for bly prevented from doing so by Serbia That in turn would have provided a basi n international law to recruit, train, e ip, and purge an effective Kosovo L eration Army (as American mercena es, with official U.S. backing, trained the Croatian Army) and, when the time cam to support these local ground troops ith purposive NATO air support.

The likely outcome cannot b foretold with precision—as Hitler said he who starts a war enters a dark room- but the policy would at least have ha a desirable and achievable war aim: amely, a new and more stable Balkan balance of power in which a weaker and chastened Serbia is surrounded by militarily defensible states allied to NATO.

But this conservative strategic vision—though advocated by some, notably Lady Thatcher and Noel Malcolm, the historian of the Balkans—was never really considered, let alone followed. This is in part because, although the policy is moral in the traditional sense of seeking to achieve a legitimate aim by prudent and proportionate means, it nonetheless has the flavor of 19th-century realpolitik about it, rather than the windy, high-minded moralizing that liberals like Bill Clinton and Tony Blair mistake for an ethical foreign policy.

There was also, however, a specific reason of policy why the conservative strategy was rejected: Although it was opposed to Serbia's aggressive nationalism, it was not opposed to ethnic nationalism in principle. Indeed, it would have enlisted the ethnic nationalism of Croatia and Kosovo (as well as the multiethnic patriotism of Bosnia) to check the Serbian variety.



Tony Blair by Roman Genn

As for the underlying theoretical question of whether ethnic nationalism is a legitimate basis for statehood, the conservative strategy (like conservative political theory in general) gives no single answer. Sometimes ethnic nationalism will ameliorate popular discontent with the least upheaval—for instance, granting the Slovaks independence peacefully; sometimes it will make matters worse, as in multiethnic Bosnia disrupted by the national claims of Bosnian Serbs; and sometimes it is an irresistible force even though its first effects will be to make matters worse, as is perhaps the case with Albanian nationalism in Kosovo. The conservative theory of statehood is that circumstances alter cases.

But Bill Clinton has a much grander theory of statehood than that platitude. His vision is opposed to ethnic nationalism as the basis for statehood in principle; it favors a new international order in which ethnic groups enjoy limited cultural autonomy in large, new, multiethnic, multicultural federations like, er, the good old U.S.A.; and it sees the Kosovo war as the first battle in the realization of this benign future. Here are two excerpts from a recent speech by the Hot Springs Metternich:

(1) "If we were to choose this course [either independence or partition for Kosovo], we would see the continuous fissioning of smaller and smaller ethnically based, inviable [*sic*] states, creating pressures for more war, more ethnic cleansing, more of the politics of repression and revenge."

(2) "Finally, we must remember the principle we and our allies have been fighting for in the Balkans is the principle of multiethnic, tolerant, inclusive democracy. We have been fighting against the idea that statehood must be based entirely on ethnicity."

This is a sort of upside-down Wilsonianism. Where Wilson pushed national self-determination, Clinton pushes a liberal, multicultural empire in which ethnic groups are limited to cultural self-expression.

But there are a number of narrow and unvisionary problems with this vision. In the first place, many—perhaps most—existing states are based on ethnic nationalist foundations, including such American allies as Japan, Germany, Spain, Israel, Ireland, France, and almost all of central and eastern Europe. Are they all illegitimate? All doomed to be subsumed into new multicultural entities? And if so, are they aware of the fact—or that America's (and NATO's) new policy is their national euthanasia?

Second, far from fading from the scene, ethnic nationalism is advancing. The collapse of Communism liberated a

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host of ancient nations in Europe and Eurasia from the prisonhouse of multiculturalism that was the Soviet empire. Now, the USSR really was a polity in which ethnic nationalism was limited to cultural expression, so that, in Anthony Daniels's mordant description, "under Communism, all minorities dance." But the peoples concerned found that unsatisfactory. And having so recently gained their political independence, they cherish it. Clinton's new policy is thus a victim of spectacularly bad timing.

Third, the new multiethnic, multicultural democracies that the president sees as the hope of the future do not actually exist as yet. The European Union, which he cites, has the ambition to become a multicultural federation, but as yet it is still a colloquy of national governments. And the multiethnic federations that used to exist—principally the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia—have perished, leaving behind them nations in which ethnic nationalism is all the fiercer for having been suppressed for 50 years.

These states were not, of course, democracies—but the unfortunate fact from Clinton's standpoint is that there are no examples of successful, long-running, multiethnic, multicultural democracies. (The apparent but misleading exceptions, India and Switzerland, raise questions larger than can be dealt with in a brief article.) Democracy seems to require the kind of fellow-feeling of which nationalism, whether of an ethnic or a cultural kind, is the main modern expression.

Finally, Clinton's international vision has spawned an incoherent policy towards Kosovo. Because he is opposed to ethnic nationalism *tout court*, he has had to oppose independence for Kosovo or any real aid to the KLA. NATO's policy, still in place though widely derided as absurd, is to compel Serbs and Kosovar Albanians to live together in a multicultural federation ruled by Milosevic. Naturally, that would require the more or less permanent presence of U.S. and other NATO ground troops to ensure that the inhabitants of the Clinton-Blair "Third Way" utopia did not all murder one another.

But are there enough American soldiers to sustain this vision everywhere? Hardly. Indeed, there may not be enough to sustain it here at home in balkanizing America. **NR**

You deserve a factual look at...

"The Arabs of Israel"

Are they a "persecuted minority?"

The world is much focused on the developments in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip, in which, for the most part, Israel has relinquished sovereignty and authority to the Palestinian Authority (P.A.). Ninety-eight percent of the Arabs in these territories live now under the rule of the P.A. There is some question whether or not they are better off than before. But many believe that Arabs in Israel itself are a "persecuted minority."

What are the facts?

Israel is a Democratic Country. Israel is an open, pluralistic, and egalitarian society. Different religions, cultures, and social traditions coexist. Protection of such diversity is embedded in Israel's traditions and confirmed by the government. About 20% of the population (over one million people) are non-Jews, most of them Arabs, and some Druze. Like all other Israeli citizens, they have full rights to vote and to hold elective office. Both Arabs and Druze hold seats in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. Every Knesset, since the founding of the State in 1948, has had Arab and Druze members. All transactions in the Knesset are simultaneously translated into Arabic, and Arab members may address the Knesset in Arabic.

"Contrary to propaganda...the Arabs in Israel enjoy every civil right and have the same status under law as Jewish Israelis."

It is official policy of the Israeli government to foster the language, culture, and traditions of the Arab minority, in the educational system and in daily life. Arabic is an official language in Israel, together with Hebrew. Israel's Arabic press is the most vibrant and independent of any country in the region. There are more than 20 Arabic periodicals. They publish what they please, subject only to the same military censorship as Jewish publications. There are daily TV and radio programs in Arabic. Arabic is taught in Jewish secondary schools. Israeli universities are renowned centers of learning in the history and literature of the Arab Middle East.

Education and literacy of the Arab population in Israel is as high as and probably higher than in any Arab country. The literacy rate among Israeli Arabs is 95%, virtually the same as for Israeli Jews. There are close to 1,000 Arab educational institutions in Israel, with about 300,000 students—just about 25 times as many as in 1948, when the State of Israel was created. Ninety percent of Arab children attend school, probably the highest ratio of any Arab population anywhere. Israeli universities and technical institutions are freely available to the Arabs. About 5,000 Arab students attend such schools.

Israeli Arabs Enjoy Full Equality in Law and in Fact. All religious communities in Israel enjoy the full protection of the State. Israeli Arabs—Moslems, as well as many Christian denominations—are free to exercise their faiths, to observe their own weekly day of rest and holidays, and to administer their own internal affairs. Each community has its own religious councils and courts, and has full jurisdiction over religious affairs, including matters of personal status, such as marriage and divorce. The holy sites of all religions are administered by their own authorities and protected by the government. In contrast to the non-Israeli Arab world, Arab women in Israel enjoy the same status as men. Israeli law grants women equal rights, including the right to vote and to be elected to public office, prohibits polygamy, child marriage, and the barbarity of female sexual mutilation. It has thus vastly changed the status of women, to far above that of any country in the region. Israeli health standards are by far the highest in the Middle East. Israeli health institutions are freely open to all Arabs, on the same basis as they are to Jews.

There is, however, one difference between the "rights" of Arabs and Jews in Israel. Israeli and Druze men are required to do three years of military service and then serve one month every year until they are 50. Arabs are exempted from military duty and are not required to perform any compensating civilian service. Since the surrounding Arab states, with the exceptions of Egypt and recently of Jordan, are the avowed enemies of Israel and are dedicated to its destruction, this exemption is granted by the Israeli government to its Arab citizens, so as to spare them conflicts of loyalty and conscience.

Contrary to propaganda and to what many believe, the Arabs in Israel are full-fledged citizens, enjoy every civil right, and have the same status in law as Jewish Israelis. In summary, they enjoy the highest standards of living and liberty of any Arabs in the Middle East. It is instructive and sobering to compare the condition of the approximately one million Arabs in Israel with that of the pitiful remnants of Jewry in Arab countries. Jews have been living in Arab countries for almost 2,000 years. Under Arab dominance, they were always third-class citizens and subject to harassment and persecution. There were about 900,000 Jews in Arab countries in 1946—now there are fewer than 25,000. But there are now over one million Arabs in Israel, as against 150,000 in 1948—an almost seven-fold increase. These figures alone would seem to prove that things can't be all that bad for Arabs in Israel.

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■ KOSOVO II

Teach In, Bug Out

Peace in my clim .

ROB LONG

Bel ir, Calif.

I KNEW I was in trouble when read the flier: The "National 'Teach ' on the War in Yugoslavia" was being h ld at the Leo Baeck Temple in "V est Los Angeles." Now, I've lived in L.A. for years, and this temple is in " West Los Angeles" only in the most gene al sense. In the most specific, it is in Be Air. No doubt the event's sponsors– Pacifica Radio, the Southern Californi Americans for Democratic Action, nd *The Nation*—were hip to the irony f a couple of hundred stringy-haired d leftists puttering up in their old VW v ns to Bel Air. So they called it "West Los Angeles" and hoped nobody would noti .

The trick to measuring he left-wingishness of any gathering to note the time elapsed between par ng your car and hearing someone ca for the immediate release of Mumia A u-Jamal, the great martyr currently on ath row for killing a Philadelphia policer an. Here it was a minute and a half, but stopped to tie my shoe, so let's call it a r nute.

Outside the hall were card t bles and kiosks dedicated to everythir from a Free East Timor to the unco ditional release of Mumia. The lad at the *Revolutionary Worker* table offe d me an "information packet" on the w r, which turned out to be five back issu s of her rag stuffed into a paper sack. S e wanted a five-dollar "donation."

"It costs five dollars?" I aske

"No, no. It's free. But we wa t a five-dollar donation."

"So it's five dollars for the packet?"

"A five-dollar *donation*," she continued to correct.

It was another ten dollars to get into the event, though this too was called a "donation." An older woman wrote out my name on a pink (!) index card, which was supposed to serve as my ticket. But no one bothered to take it, and when I entered the hall, each auditorium door was marked by a ticket color: Blue tickets were to use the far-left door, pink tickets the next one over, and so on. Inside, people just milled around.

So Soviet style ruled the day: In ten minutes, I had been shaken down for 15 bucks, given a ticket no one would ask for, and told which door to use, though no one seemed to care. I had also been handed about ten xeroxed screeds, only a few of which pertained to Kosovo, and one of which attacked the radio station sponsoring the event for being insufficiently radical. The Mumia-fication of the teach-in was complete when I overheard two participants discussing the war from "Mumia's perspective."

Of the 28 speakers (28!), only three really captured the crowd. The first, Ian Williams, caught them all off guard by supporting—vociferously—the war. Williams is *The Nation*'s U.N. correspondent (trust the paleo-Left to assign the U.N. its very own correspondent), and he spoke with wit and passion. He was roundly booed and hissed. The crowd included a very large Serbian-American contingent, there being a sizable Serb population in Los Angeles, west or otherwise. But Williams managed to score some excellent points. "Kosovo," he said in his working-class Scottish burr, "is Vietnam." Much applause. "But," he went on, "the Serbs are the Americans." Silence from the crowd as they worked that one out. Then a few shouts of "Go home!" in distinctly Slav accents.

Arianna Huffington was there, glamorous and out of place, but she quickly won over the crowd with her breezy lines (Madeleine Albright and Sandy Berger are "dwarves") and her inside-the-media analysis. It must have been a treat for the gray-ponytail set to hear a genuine celebrity—a real Establishment pundit—talk about media spin. Sort of like "radical chic" in reverse.

It was Jesse Jackson, though, who really confused the crowd. They wanted to love him, and when he walked up to the lectern in a hail of flashbulbs and key lights, it seemed as if drama had finally come to the teach-in, or drone-on, as I had come to think of it. But near the end of his speech, the Reverend said a curious thing: "If bombing would stop the ethnic cleansing, then we should keep bombing." He looked up at the crowd, expecting a major ovation. He got, instead, a few claps and a deep intake of breath. In other words, Jesse Jackson got the kind of reception you'd expect him to get in a Bel Air synagogue.

"You can stop it!" Arianna Huffington exhorted the crowd, referring to the war. But this crowd couldn't stop a dairy cow, let alone a NATO operation. They're too busy hissing and booing and handing out xeroxes. And since most of them believe that military force is unjustified under any circumstances (except, maybe, to free Mumia), it's left to a strange bedfellow like La Huff to make the thoughtful argument against the bombing, which is that it is a kind of "global Waco" where the bloodshed and violence created by the "rescuers" negates the reason for that rescue in the first place.

At a certain point, I had had enough. I made my way through the chattering crowd, past the Free East Timor booth, past the Tibet Now table, past the lady selling copies of the *Revolutionary Worker*, and finally past the Free Mumia kiosk. These people aren't fighting yesterday's war. They aren't even fighting yesterday's peace. They're just . . . talking. NR

Mr. Long is a contributing edit r of NATIONAL REVIEW, in which he w ites "Letter from Al."

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■ RUSSIA ■

Chaos Management

The state has failed.

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

In Russia today, the elements of catastrophe seem to be gathering. The currency has collapsed, there is no wealth creation, land remains unprivatized, and conditions generally are intolerable. The future hangs on a single man, Boris Yeltsin, the president—Tsar Boris to the Russians. Elderly, ill, crafty but not a statesman, he evidently has no idea of what should be done. Each time push comes to shove, he resorts to the same bewildered and bewildering device of appointing a new prime minister. The latest, Sergei Stepanshin, is the fourth in a short period of time. A mere figurehead, the person of the prime minister is immaterial in reality. The state has failed. As in 1917, power is lying in the streets.

When states fail, they founder in revolution and civil war. Russia is a federation of no fewer than 89 regions with recognized degrees of autonomy. Three or four times as many small but distinct national minorities have long-cherished separatist aims or aspirations. If Moscow does not hold, dozens of nationalist struggles have the potential to end in fragmentation and civil wars whose outcomes are unpredictable.

Day by day, signs multiply that the center in Moscow is giving ground. Each region has its governor, who is elected locally. Defending their interests, these governors increasingly keep control of the local economy and its resources, no longer remitting money to Moscow in the form of taxes. A vicious spiral results. Receiving only about 30 percent of the tax revenues due, the state cannot meet its federal obligations. Russia cannot pay for its army and its police, its school system or its hospitals or its pensions. The poor and needy are left to starve. Communications break down. There is no money to prevent Chernobyl-type accidents at outdated nuclear-power plants and in nuclear-powered submarines. The richest country in the world in terms of resources, Russia now has an economy about the size of Holland's.

The supposed transition from Communism to democracy was not quite what it might seem on the surface. The old ruling Communist party has merely split into two blocs. Party diehards continue to call themselves Communists, and under Gennady Zyuganov they dominate the parliament, or Duma, anticipating and working for some return to the old days. In temperament and upbringing, Yeltsin belongs with them, but his relentless struggle for supreme power obliged him to position himself at the head of the other bloc, the so-called reformers.

What exactly had to be reformed—and how—was uncharted territory. Here was a political and social dilemma in need of a Locke, a Montesquieu, the Founding Fathers. Those who in fact addressed the question had only a lifetime's experience of Communism to guide them. After the implosion of the Communist party in 1991, several legal experts in Moscow were commissioned to draft the outlines of new institutions. Rejecting the various proposals submitted to him, Yeltsin put in place in 1993 a constitution that reserved executive and legislative and even judicial powers to the president. In plain language, Yeltsin privatized power to himself.

As Tsar Boris, he rules by decree, signing every year somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000 of them, some essential, others trivial. To have any conception of the contents of so much paper is beyond one man's capacity. Most of the time he signs whatever lobbyists and fortune-hunters put before him. Carrying the weight of law, a Yeltsin signature means privilege and wealth to whoever can master the black arts of obtaining and then enforcing it, and all at the expense of the public purse.

Russians as a people are unusually generous, rather sentimental, and no more dishonest than others. But first Communism, and now this novel and peculiar mutation of it, has encouraged cruelty and selfishness. Individuals protect themselves as best they can, self-abasing towards those who can hurt them, and ruthless to those whom they can hurt. Employers cease to pay wages, wage-earners cease to pay taxes. To be a good citizen, or to show altruism, is to do yourself an injury.

The concept of social contract is absurd in such circumstances, and there can be no question of the rule of law. The gang becomes the one vital voluntary association. There are said to be at least 10,000 gangs operating at present in all areas of the country, all employing criminal methods and a law unto themselves. Yeltsin's cronies are one gang, the Communists in the Duma another, the police a third, the army a fourth. Each banker and press lord has his retainers and guards, and so on down to the hoodlums with hand grenades and small arms.

As the gangs obtain, and then enforce, Tsar Boris's many and sometimes contradictory signatures, dirty tricks expand to fill the whole of public life. As in old Soviet days, powerful petitioners drive into the Kremlin in black cars with blinds drawn over the windows. Who owes what to whom? Rumors circulate about the honesty of Yeltsin himself, his daughter Tatiana and some of his closest associates. The numbers of hidden and illegal foreign accounts are available on the Internet, but nobody is prosecuted. Anyone who obstructs a private interest is liable to be disposed of, perhaps murdered.

A grim example was Galina Starovoitova, a deputy in the Duma, a former minister and a genuine democrat, shot dead on her doorstep. A rival politician has been openly accused of arranging the killing, but nobody is prosecuted. Other scandals are rigged quite as brazenly. In separate incidents, the prosecutor-general and another official in charge of human rights were secretly filmed cavorting naked with prostitutes, and the films were then shown on television.

Russia, in a famous remark of Prince Metternich, that most calculating of chancellors in the old Austro-Hungarian empire, is never as strong as it looks, and never as weak as it looks either. For so long the root cause of distress, Communism cannot now evolve into the

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solution. Those like Zyuganov ho speak of a return to anything like Ler nism and Stalinism have no general ap eal. Tsar Boris's popularity may be below) percent in opinion polls, but, despi regular attempts by the Communis in the Duma to impeach him, nobody s seriously calling for his head. In a real lemocracy, there would be huge and probably violent demonstrations against government at once so incapable an corrupt, but nothing of the kind is s irring in Russia. With patience and i vention, people are putting up with wha they dislike and resent but are unable t change.

Yeltsin has almost served ou the two terms allowed to a presiden In the course of next year, election have to take place for his successor. Hi frequent and autocratic shuffling of pri e ministers has weakened all those w o might first oppose and then succeed im. But comes the hour, comes t e man. Someone of vision has to pi up the power lying in the streets an institutionalize it, putting into place t e checks and balances without which th re is not even minimum democracy. F form of the 1993 constitution is the b st—perhaps the only—hope for holdi together the stricken Russian feder ion and fulfilling its undoubted strengt s. Chaos and civil strife are the alternati es. **NR**

■ CULTURE WAT H ■

Love for S ale

The song of Joyce J. D.

BROOKE ALLE

MANY crocodile tears hav recently been shed in the press c er Joyce Maynard's decision to put her love letters from J. D. Salinger up for a ction at Sotheby's. Most commentator claim to find the sale tasteless and cra s, at the least; at worst, they judge it a b trayal of love. Joyce Carol Oates calls it he ironic end of a fantasy of idealized love"; E. L. Doctorow says he simply finds the whole thing "sad."

But let's be honest for a moment: Isn't it really . . . well, just a little bit *funny*? No satirist could have invented a more ludicrously mismatched couple: Salinger, private and reclusive to the point of paranoia, and the exhibitionistic Maynard, who spills her guts in public about everything from her sexual dysfunctions to her breast implants and who even has a personal website to keep her fans up to date on every detail of her family's banal lives. Cynthia Ozick has compared the situation to that of a Henry James story, and there is much truth in the analogy, but its theme of the commodification of celebrity has a decidedly Nineties ring, making the whole mess look more like Henry James as rewritten by Tom Wolfe, or maybe Bret Easton Ellis.

The legal rights of each party are clear: When it comes to personal letters, the writer of a letter owns the copyright to the words, but the recipient owns the letter itself, the piece of paper on which the words are written. The act of selling love letters when their author is still alive is, of course, trashy. Yet there are cases where it's hard to get too terribly worked up, and this, in spite of the reverence in which Salinger is widely held, is one of them. First, Salinger, who was 53 at the time he wooed and won the 18-year-old Joyce Maynard, should have had the good sense, if not the good taste, to keep his mitts off of impressionable young girls. He behaved badly in seducing her, and badly in the way he subsequently dumped her.

Not, of course, that Maynard is any victim. She was over the age of consent (just) and certainly well aware, despite her youth, of Salinger's market value as a celebrity. But so far as I can see she is not behaving as a victim, either. She is simply taking her revenge, in the time-honored tradition, on a man who withdrew his love, and taking it in a brilliantly sadistic fashion by attacking him in his most vulnerable spot: his obsession over privacy. In the "Letter from Joyce" on her website, Maynard claims, "I have no interest in in carrying out acts of retribution against J. D. Salinger." Yeah, right. But when she continues with, "But neither do I feel I owe Salinger my protection," it's hard to come up with any good reason why she should.

The powers-that-be at Sotheby's, feeling perhaps a little on the defensive after all this hand-wringing, have rather gratuitously provided a rationale for their decision to accept the commission. "I think," their spokesperson told the *New York Times*, "that Joyce Maynard feels it is appropriate for these letters to be available to scholars and the outside world for further knowledge and insight into a great American writer." A likely story! But why, after all, should anyone expect Sotheby's to get on its high horse? Celebrity memorabilia now make up a significant portion of the wares of the major auction houses, and with items like "icons" (so described) from the glory days of Studio 54, petit-point pug dogs out of the Duchess of Windsor's boudoir, and even, if I remember correctly, the shortie nightgown worn by Britt Eklund on her honeymoon with Peter Sellers up for sale in the recent past, it would be surprising if their purveyors were to look down their noses at the correspondence of a certified Great American Novelist.

It is possible that the worst damage Maynard's revelations about Salinger have inflicted is not so much on the public perception of his character—for how many people really expect writers to be upstanding human beings?—but on that of his fiction. I had always liked, for example, "For Esmé—with Love and Squalor," and it had never struck me as the work of a man who is just a tad too fond of pubescent females; but that impression is inescapable now. By the same token, all the disenchanted stuff in *The Catcher in the Rye*, all the business about searching for one pure soul in a dirty world, now seems not so much haunting sadness over lost innocence as the irritable grumblings of a disappointed, bitter man.

I would rather not have known the nasty details Joyce Maynard has spilled to us; I would have preferred to be able to go on enjoying Salinger's fiction in a naïve, clueless fashion. I suspect that many of his readers feel the same way, and that this accounts for the rage Maynard's shenanigans have inspired. Nevertheless, in a world where real outrages occur every day against real victims, it is hard to drum up too much sympathy for either the lecherous Salinger or his opportunistic onetime nymphet. **NR**

Brooke Allen reviews books re ularly for *The New Criterion* and oth publications.

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■ COVER STORY ■

My New York

An intellectual considers his city, from LaGuardia to Giuliani and beyond.

NORMAN PODHORETZ

SOMETHING evil is going on in New York. But in order to justify resorting to this strongest of all epithets, I need to tell the story of the twists and turns I personally have witnessed and experienced as a native and lifelong resident of the city.

Perhaps as good a place as any to begin is with a phone call I received some years ago from a woman doing publicity for the Brooklyn division of the New York Public Library system. From her broad midwestern accent alone, I could tell that she came from neither Brooklyn nor anywhere else in New York, but even without that detail, the question she asked me would have proved definitively that she knew next to nothing about the city.

The question was this: As one of a number of "prominent people" born and bred in Brooklyn, would I be willing to have my picture included in a brochure celebrating an upcoming anniversary of the library? I would be honored, I said; just send the photographer up to my office. "Oh no," she answered, "we want to take your picture in front of the local branch you used as a kid."

I had to pause before replying with a laugh that I had no objection to this arrangement provided they could send me in a tank, or at least with a police escort. And they had better do the same for the photographer. Even if the branch from which I had regularly borrowed books many years earlier was still standing—which I doubted—the neighborhood surrounding it had become a war zone, and any middle-class white who ventured into it would be lucky ever to get out in one piece, if at all.

It was clear from her hemming and hawing that she was trying to decide whether to take this as a piece of especially extravagant hyperbole or a shameless display of racism; and since I never heard from her again, I concluded that she had opted for the latter. Yet I was exaggerating only slightly about the danger of setting foot in the 1970s or '80s into the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, where I had spent the first twenty years of my life (1930–50), during most of which Fiorello H. LaGuardia was the mayor of New York.

Manhattan as seen from Brooklyn, c. 1940

Admittedly, it was not exactly a peaceable neighborhood even then. In my own corner of it, immigrant Jews from East Europe lived side by side with Italian immigrants from Sicily, and Negroes from the rural American South who, if they were not strictly speaking immigrants, were no less foreign to the ways of the big city than their white neighbors. In these three groups, the adults had as little to do with one another as physical contiguity permitted. But their children (most of them, like me, born in America) all went to the nearby public school together, except for those who were sent either to Catholic or Jewish schools.

Throwing the children into the same educational "melting pot" unquestionably worked to reinforce the process of Americanization that would eventually differentiate us in ways both large and small from our parents. Yet as opposed to what school "integrationists" would naïvely have expected, there was scarcely any lessening among the kids of the ethnic and racial suspicions and hostilities pervading the immigrant generation. On the contrary: Animosity was still strong enough in the second generation to erupt periodically in fistfights or turf wars. By the murderous standards of the future, these battles were relatively tame. Never did they involve guns and only rarely knives (though stones, bottles, and baseball bats could be pretty lethal themselves).

But what I want to emphasize is that such intergroup and interracial clashes were confined almost entirely to the kids. Among the adults, the only violence that ever broke out was black on black, usually (in a carryover from a southern tradi-

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tion) on Saturday nights in a ıd around the bars in which no white person was ever seen. ſet (in another carryover from the South) neither was any v ıite passerby ever assaulted.

WORLD OF MY FATHER; WOF .D OF MY OWN

My father's experience w: ; typical. He worked all night long delivering milk, and on ıis way home from the subway, he had to pass those bars. Us ıally this was about 7:30 in the morning when they were sti closed, but every Saturday he spent the whole day collecti ; the week's bills from the customers on his delivery route nd did not get back until dark. And so as he walked past the bars and the clusters of drunks invariably hanging around o tside them, the pockets of his uniform would be bulging a d jingling with the coins that would remain in his care unti he could turn them over to the company on Monday. Yet e en at the height of the Great Depression of the '30s, never ɔnce was he mugged or robbed.

Subsequently, in the late '-)s, I myself commuted daily by subway from Brownsville to t e Columbia campus in uptown Manhattan. Two nights a we k I also attended the academic division of the Jewish Theolo ıcal Seminary, which was somewhat farther north than Colu ıbia and only three short blocks from Harlem. Even then, a g ɔup of us—including a number of girls—thought nothing ol saving some time after classes were over by cutting across a ry dark Morningside Park at 10 o'clock at night to a subway s ıation in Harlem itself.

When precisely it became most suicidally foolhardy to do such a thing I cannot say. Al ıost certainly, like so much else by which we have been curs d, the new danger was born in the '60s. At any rate, I can remember going to a Harlem nightclub as late as the late '50s without feeling fearful or unwelcome. But I can also ı member looking back on that experience a short time after ard with incredulity. By then I was married and living ı the Upper West Side of Manhattan, and the menac in the air of my childhood in Brooklyn was now becomin palpable in my present neighborhood as well.

For example, after parkin my car at night in the nearest garage, I would feel as thou ı I were traversing a minefield while walking the five blocks o my apartment. Did the group of young Puerto Ricans ha ging out on the corner ahead seem more dangerous than ı ıe one across the street or the cluster of blacks looming a l ock farther up? Should I cross here, and take my chances th re, or would it be more prudent to keep going?

This was not paranoia or racial profiling": I was in fact accosted once in a while. I ıt growing up in the wilds of Brooklyn turned out to be g ɔod basic training in the techniques of brazening my way ı ıt of danger, and except for the rancid taste of fear and the umiliation it brought with it, I always got away unscathed.)thers with softer backgrounds were not so lucky, and stories ɔf muggings became the staples of neighborhood lore and co versation.

One consequence was the ormation of block associations that would hire private secur y guards to patrol at night. This reliance on what I sardonic ly named a bunch of low-rent Wyatt Earps was decided upc ı, remember, in one of the most liberal parts of New York, wh re practically everyone believed that nothing could be done a out violent crime until its "root causes"—that is, discrimination and poverty—were eliminated.

I raised four children in that neighborhood, and I very nearly bankrupted myself sending them to private schools because, beyond the lower grades, the local public schools were even less safe than the ones I had attended in Brooklyn. But I do not wish to exaggerate. Though a couple of my kids were robbed or roughed up on the streets by blacks or Hispanics a number of times, nothing worse than that happened to them or any of my neighbors' kids in the twenty years I lived on the Upper West Side.

Almost certainly, like so much much else by which we have been cursed, the new danger was born in the '60s.

Nevertheless, the point had long since been reached where all New Yorkers were increasingly wary of going out at night; and no one with any sense would venture into the parks after dark. Yet the paradox was that this thickening apprehension manifested itself in tandem with a great hopefulness about the new possibilities of racial harmony. In the late '50s and early '60s, the civil-rights movement, still in its benevolent integrationist phase, was under the leadership of advocates of nonviolence like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and great believers (like Roy Wilkins of the NAACP and Whitney Young of the Urban League) in the courts and the Congress as instruments of peaceable reform.

There was, however, a dark side to this integrationist optimism. It consisted in the readiness of many white New Yorkers to tolerate behavior from "minorities" (a new solecistic euphemism that had crept into the language) that only yesterday had been regarded as intolerable coming from anyone at all.

INTO THE PIT

I first became aware of this development through what may seem a ridiculously trivial event—the sight of a black man lighting a cigarette on a subway train. At this distance, it is hard to convey how extraordinary it then was for anyone to smoke on the subway. Never before in all the thousands of hours I had spent traveling the subways in New York had I seen anyone light up inside one of the cars. I cannot explain why this particular rule had always been observed so punctiliously; but the fact was that it always had been, and to see it being violated—without anyone, including me, daring to protest—was so shocking that it seemed like the beginning of the end of civil order in New York.

Hysterical as my reaction now sounds, this violation turned out to be a clear foreshadowing of what, where far more serious matters—up to and including violent assault and murder—were concerned, was to become the norm in New York. So much so that when in the '70s (or '80s?) a number of New Yorkers were asked by a magazine to isolate the single most important problem afflicting the city and

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what it would take to solve it, I answered that so long as we continued "tolerating the intolerable," we would go on sliding down the slippery slope onto which we had fallen. I ended by wondering when, if ever, we would allow ourselves to reach bottom. Surely there must be a limit to our willingness to accept conditions that were so recently and so universally regarded as intolerable. Or was there?

For a long while, it looked as though the answer was no. The assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968 set off a series of veritably volcanic eruptions in black neighborhoods all over the country, but even in the preceding three years there had already been riots in many of the major American cities. Among blacks themselves, the burnings and the lootings were accompanied by a resurgence of various forms of anti-white black nationalism, with their repudiation of nonviolence in favor of "mau-mauing" or even "taking up the gun," and their rejection of integration in favor of separatism. And among white liberals, there arose a disposition to justify not only the riots but also any outrages committed under the auspices of this great ideological sea change.

In New York, the shift in attitudes among both blacks and whites more or less coincided with the mayoralty of John V. Lindsay (1965–73), a liberal Republican who ultimately made an honest man out of himself by becoming a liberal Democrat. But probably just as significant was the accession in that same era of McGeorge Bundy to the presidency of the Ford Foundation in New York.

Before his appointment to this job in 1966, Bundy had been national security advisor to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, and had played a key role in the American decision first to intervene in Vietnam and then to escalate our involvement in the hope of winning the war. But by the time he left the waning Johnson administration, Bundy had evidently come to believe that it had been a mistake to resist the Communist Vietcong in the first place.

Lower Manhattan as seen from Midtown, 1943

On the basis of the policy he immediately adopted as the new president of the Ford Foundation, I used to joke that no sooner had he arrived there than he summoned his staff and demanded that they bring him the Vietcong. The Vietcong? In New York? At so uncomprehending a reaction, as I imagined the scene, a derisive sneer formed on the lips of this famously arrogant New England patrician who knew as much about New York as the publicity lady at the Brooklyn Public Library (or as he himself had known about Vietnam when he plunged into it). "I mean the black radicals, the militants," I could hear him snarling at his underlings. "Get them up here, because this time, instead of fighting them, we're going to give them all grants."

But whether or not any exchange even remotely resembling this ever actually transpired, my imaginary scenario captures precisely how Bundy proceeded to deploy the great wealth and power of the Ford Foundation. In New York at that moment, the main objective of the radicals was to take over the public schools through a system known as "community control." Bundy threw the resources of the Ford Foundation behind this objective and the people pursuing it, while Lindsay more discreetly (being an elected official) added his own weight to the new strategy of appeasement.

Naturally, Bundy and Lindsay and their hordes of cheerleaders on the left did not think of themselves as engaging in a cynical maneuver, and certainly not as the cowardly victims of a novel species of protection racket. In their own eyes, they were supporting programs designed to bring about a greater degree of social justice.

Similar programs instituted with the same rationale had already been set into motion by Johnson's "War on Poverty" and were constantly either being added to or funded more lavishly than ever (even after Richard Nixon replaced Johnson as president in 1969). And all the while, New York City became a more and more dangerous and unpleasant place to live.

THE BOWERY EVERYWHERE

Thus, thanks to an "enlightened" policy of releasing psychiatric patients from the institutions in which they had been hospitalized, New Yorkers soon found themselves tolerating hordes of raving lunatics—white as well as black—screaming and sometimes lunging at them with knives or other weapons, or pushing them off subway platforms into the path of oncoming trains.

The swelling population of the "homeless" who had taken to sleeping (and urinating and defecating) on the streets was made up in some part of these "deinstitutionalized" victims of a theory that was as delusional as their own psychotic fantasies. (The theory was that their illnesses could be treated adequately on the outside by medication, assuming that they were even really ill rather than rebels against a society that was itself insane and therefore eager to pin that label on anyone who refused to conform to its demented conception of rationality.)

But many of the homeless were also incorrigible alcoholics and junkies—again, both white and black—of the type who had once been confined by the police to the Bowery (New York's Skid Row). Now, however, their spillover into every part of the city was winked at by the police for the simple reason that no public outcry was raised against this intolerable situation.

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The upshot was that begga —a class mainly composed, like the homeless with whom ıey overlapped, of deinstitutionalized psychiatric patients and drug addicts and alcoholics—now abounded every vhere a New Yorker went. Their pleas for money were of n made with glowering eyes and threatening gestures. Or t ıey might station themselves at intersections where cars wer forced to wait for the light to change and start to "clean" th windshields with filthy rags and squeegees, for which serv e most drivers considered it the better part of prudence to ıell out a "tip."

Some judge: decided that trying to hos ɔitalize several lunatics was an infringement on their civil liberties.

Any effort to cease toleratin these intolerable conditions was invariably frustrated by the courts. I remember in particular a federal judge named Leo ard Sand ruling that it was a violation of the First Amendm ıt to ban begging in the subway. Other judges decided tha trying to hospitalize several out-of-control lunatics was an fringement on their civil liberties (or was it their civil right ?).

And all this is not even to m ntion the horrific increase in crimes of assault, rape, and m rder whose numbers rose to hitherto unthinkable levels. s Daniel Patrick Moynihan would point out, the gunning down of seven mobsters in Chicago in 1929 became knov ı as the St. Valentine's Day "massacre." Now, however, even murders were hardly enough to make the evening ne vs, and if the murderers were actually caught, chances were t at they would be back on the street in very short order.

No wonder, then, that almo everyone had become sour on the city by the mid '70s. C ıce upon a time, Americans from other parts of the country vould say that New York was a nice place to visit, but they vouldn't want to live there. Increasingly, however, New Yc kers themselves were saying the same thing, while non-Ne v Yorkers were no longer so sure that it was even a nice pla e to visit.

True, most of the great mus ums and concert halls were still located in relatively safe eas, but the Broadway theaters in the Times Square ar a were now surrounded by some of the worst concentrati ıs of the ills that had infected other parts of town: filth streets, aggressive beggars, junkies and their suppliers, pr stitutes of both sexes (often children), transvestites, porn graphic movie theaters and stores.

Mostly here I have been tall ng about Manhattan, but in certain parts of the other bor ıghs it was even worse. The war zone my old neighborhoo n Brooklyn had become was matched and even trumped by he South Bronx, whose very name evoked an image of urb ı decay at its most extreme. An occasional improvement w ıuld be announced, and perhaps even effected, through ɔme initiative or other. But more commonly, well-intentic ed interventions either collapsed or only made things wo e.

In general, no one seemed to know what to do about the deterioration, and morale sank to a lower level than I had ever seen it go. Amazingly, even very prosperous New Yorkers who could enjoy the glamorous life—the great restaurants, the star-studded parties, the hugely expensive apartments on the Upper East Side—began to talk of leaving the city.

EXODUS, REAL AND CONTEMPLATED

In the intellectual community, which was my milieu, people to whom anywhere in America but New York had once been "Nowheresville" now also not only talked of leaving but actually left, most often for Washington. Indeed, so many intellectuals started moving there in the late '70s that articles began to be written claiming that Washington, replacing New York, was becoming the intellectual as well as the political capital of the country.

The most formidable such article came from none other than my old friend Irving Kristol. Long regarded as the quintessential New York intellectual, Kristol of all people had pulled up stakes and relocated in Washington, taking the magazine he edited, *The Public Interest*, with him. So portentous did Kristol's desertion of New York seem, and so persuasive was the case he made for its decline as an intellectual center, that I—considered another quintessential New York intellectual—was suddenly getting calls from reporters who wanted to know whether I agreed with him and whether I intended to follow him down there. My answer was that I thought he was right about the decline of New York as an intellectual center, but way off in claiming that Washington would or could replace it.

The problem, I said in a piece I then decided to write in reply to Kristol, was that Washington was a company town. As Detroit was to automobiles, and as Los Angeles was to the movie business, so Washington was to the one great industry for which it had been created. No matter how many think tanks might set up shop there, or how many veterans of New York's ideological wars might join them, Washington would remain umbilically tied to the affairs of the federal government.

As such, it would always strangle any idea that could not immediately be translated into a legislative proposal or a political scheme. But for ideas that aimed "only" at analyzing or synthesizing the realities around us so that we could comprehend or appreciate them better, Washington had little patience and less time. Which meant that it could never provide an environment for a genuinely serious intellectual community.

The New York I had once lived in was a world made up mainly of writers and critics and magazine editors like myself, with an admixture of painters and musicians, who saw one another on a regular basis and who spent much of their time arguing with great heat and seriousness about the arts and politics. The politics in question did not as a rule involve the issues that usually agitated elected officials or that arose in electoral contests. For none of us cared all that much about Democrats and Republicans ("Tweedledumb and Tweedledumber," as one well-known New York intellectual, Dwight Macdonald, once dismissed them). It was politics in

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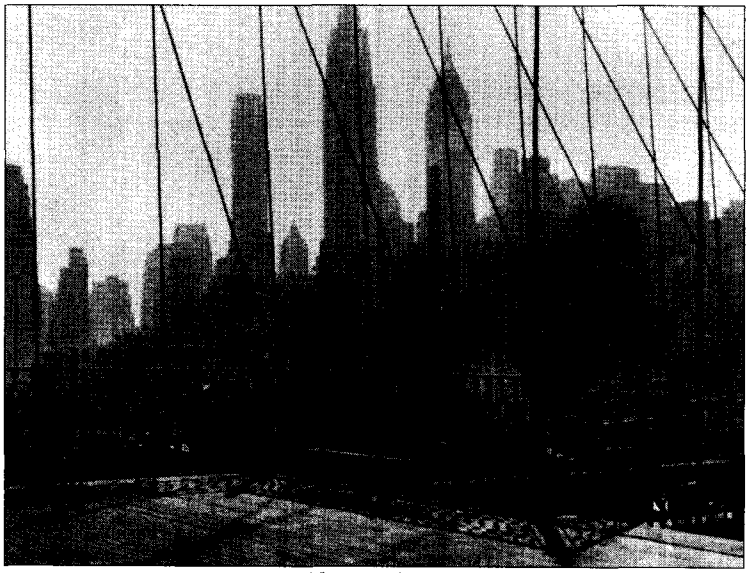
the ideological sense that preoccupied us almost exclusively.

This meant arguing about Karl Marx and which of his latter-day disciples, if any, was the legitimate carrier of his analysis and his vision. It meant (since we all agreed that Stalin had betrayed the cause of socialism for which the Russian revolution had been fought) arguing about whether a change of regime in the Soviet Union could make a difference, or whether the crimes of Stalinism were the logically inexorable consequence of the Communist system, or even (a breathtakingly bold idea) of Marxism itself.

But it also meant arguing about America. Was this country nothing more than the embodiment of a materialistic, plutocratic, puritanical, and philistine culture? Intellectuals not only on the left but also on the right (like Henry Adams and the "Southern Agrarians" of the 1930s) had been saying so for at least a century now. Yet some of us (the ones who ultimately became known as "neoconservatives") were beginning to believe that America was the single greatest bastion and defender of freedom and prosperity in a world menaced by murderous totalitarian tyrannies. About this, too, furious debate raged on and on.

On that level, we were all very passionate about politics. And we were equally passionate about the arts. I had seen grown men nearly come to blows over the merits of a book of poems (the publication of Robert Lowell's *Life Studies* in 1959 was one such occasion), and I myself (in 1953, at the age of 23!) was threatened with ruin by another famous poet, John Berryman, for what to him was the unforgivably bad critical judgment I had shown in writing an unfavorable review of Saul Bellow's novel *The Adventures of Augie March*. I had also known people who ceased speaking to each other because one of them was convinced that Jackson Pollock was the wave of the future in painting, and the other was betting on Willem de Kooning.



Brooklyn Bridge, 1940

Yes, *that* New York was pretty well dead and gone by the mid 1970s. It had already been weakened by the dispersal of its members to universities all over the country, and then it was killed off by the assault on its foundations that came from the New Left and the counterculture of the previous decade. Hence the intellectual life of the city was now conducted almost entirely on paper, with very few face-to-face encounters to give it an extra lift and a heartier dose of spice.

Nevertheless, New York, I thought, still constituted a better environment for thinking and writing about important matters, including even political matters, than Washington. According to Kristol, the ruling passion of New York had become the pursuit of money. Not that he had anything against this. Though he did not quote Dr. Johnson—"There are few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money"—his own attitude was much the same. But the pursuit of money did not, in his view, give as much food for thought as the ruling passion of Washington, which was the pursuit of power. But here, in my opinion, Kristol was mistaken.

As I saw it, the ruling passion of New York was the ambition for success, of which the acquisition or possession of money was merely one of many different forms. Unlike political power, success could be sought in so great a variety of fields that the obsession with it made for a more multifarious and therefore more intellectually interesting world than was dreamed of in the monomaniacal philosophy of our most monolithic company town.

"So," I said in conclusion, "I wish my old friend well in his new surroundings, but for *this* surviving remnant of the moribund New York intellectual community, Manhattan is the only place to be."

ROCK BOTTOM; THEN LIGHT

I was perfectly sincere when I wrote these words, but they were incomplete in that they did not touch upon the disgust I shared with so many other New Yorkers about the overall condition of the city. Nor was this disgust significantly lessened by the fact that I had by now moved from the Upper West Side of Manhattan to the Upper East Side. There one felt—and in fact was—safer, but even in this most prosperous and privileged part of Manhattan, people were permitted to sleep on the streets at night and to accost one by day with pleas (or rather, demands) for money. Even there, in other words, toleration of the intolerable was still the regnant ethos.

Some improvement seemed to be in the offing when Edward I. Koch became mayor in 1978 and began offering public resistance to what he called the "poverty pimps." Koch even tried hard to get the homeless off the streets and into shelters, but for a host of reasons—not least the opposition he ran into from the courts and liberal organizations like the ACLU—he failed. Therefore, while Koch's colorful rhetoric helped create a better atmosphere, the actual condition of the city remained dismal. Moreover, the outspoken mayor's candor about race, though refreshing to some of us, simultaneously played, as opportunity arose, into the hands of black demagogues like Al Sharpton and Sonny Carson and their white fellow travelers.

It all went even farther downhill when David Dinkins, New York's first black mayor, succeeded Koch in 1990. The gentlemanly Dinkins, a standard product of the old

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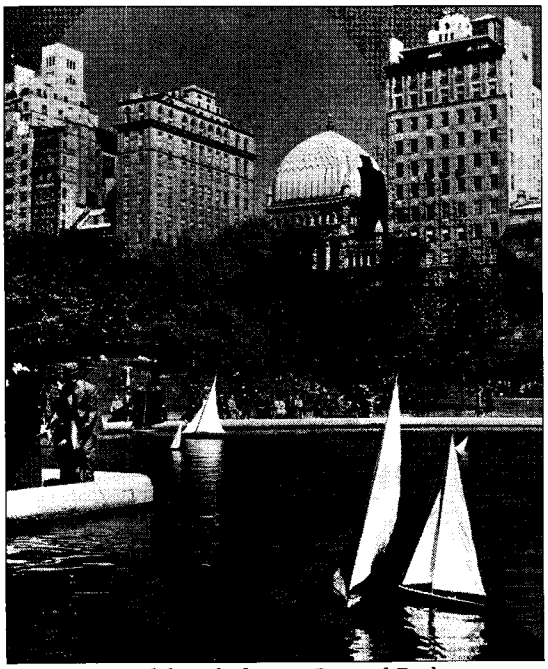
Democratic machine in New Y rk, was not himself cut from the same cloth as the likes of harpton. Yet being black, he was much more subject than och to the pressures coming from such quarters. The result as that he permitted Carson, in violation of a court order, t stage a boycott in Brooklyn against a Korean grocery store hat went on for weeks with, at most, token interference fro the police. Dinkins was also very slow to respond when bla ks in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Crown Heights rioted gainst their Orthodox Jewish neighbors, and a rabbinical st lent was set upon by a mob and stabbed to death.

It was incidents such as thes that led to Dinkins's defeat in 1993 at the hands of Rudolp Giuliani, a Republican who (unlike Lindsay) was not a libe l Democrat at heart. Having voted for Giuliani, I obviously gured that he would be better than Dinkins. Yet neither I or anyone else ever dreamed that the new mayor—or any ther person occupying that office—would be able to turn e city around, let alone that he would do so almost overnig t. How wrong we were!

Our error arose from a failur to anticipate two things that would previously have seemed ut of the question. One was the application of an acaden c theory for fighting crime that—perhaps for the first tin in the history of academic theories of social policy—not ly worked but did so almost from the minute it was put in practice. This was the so-called "broken windows" th sis originally developed by George L. Kelling and Jam s Q. Wilson.

Simply described, the thesis held that neglect of very minor i frac-tions of public order encourage and engendered larger and more s ious crimes that were much more di icult to tackle. Under the influence this idea, the Giuliani administ tion concentrated on apparently ivial "quality-of-life" offenses. In a flash the squeegee wielders were gone from the intersections in whicl they had formerly stationed thems lves; suddenly there was hardly a d elict sleeping on the streets by nigl and begging by day; all at once, y uths avoiding the payment of fa s by jumping over subway turnstil ran into the waiting arms of cops the other side. This last tactic, the amazement of everyone but (I lare-say) Kelling and Wilson, brou ght a bonus in the arrest of a very lar e number of youths who were packing guns and were wantec or some graver charge.

All by itself, this campaign e fected an enormous transformation. From a city that even a stubborn holdout like me had started wondering whether to eave, New York was turning into a place in which it was ag in a pleasure simply to walk. It was by no means a paradise, nd certainly it helped that the economy—fueled by the Wall treet boom and engendering such improvements as the cl anup of Times Square—was doing so well.



Model yacht basin, Central Park

But it was itself stupid to imagine that the change in New York could all be credited to "the economy, stupid." The truth was that a majority of New Yorkers—including even liberals whispering to one another at dinner parties, if rarely in public—had finally answered my question about whether the point would ever be reached when New Yorkers would stop tolerating the intolerable. That this point had indeed been reached was what put Giuliani into City Hall and gave him a mandate to see whether a crackdown would actually bring results even while at least some of the "root causes" of crime remained in place.

The second unexpectedly fruitful course Giuliani adopted in following through on this mandate was to enlarge the NYPD's "street crime" unit. This was an elite force of plain-clothes policemen who were sent to high-crime areas (which were invariably populated by blacks and Hispanics) and empowered to take measures that would prevent crime instead of just pursuing perpetrators after their crimes had been committed. Such measures included stopping suspicious-looking types and frisking them in the hope of confiscating concealed weapons.

A KILLING AND A REVERSAL

It was four officers in this unit who last February pumped 19 bullets into an innocent young immigrant named Amadou Diallo from Guinea, under—so far as we know—the impression that he was a serial rapist for whom they had been searching and that he was about to pull a gun on them. Here was the golden opportunity Al Sharpton had been waiting for to launch what Arch Puddington, in a recent article in *Commentary*, aptly described as "The War on the War on Crime." It was also the perfect cue for the temporarily silenced "root cause" crowd to find its voice again. Daily demonstrations were held featuring famous politicians and even more famous actors and actresses who demanded that federal investigations be launched. No comparably garish a show of "radical chic" had been seen in New York since Leonard Bernstein's notorious party for the Black Panthers in 1970.

Never mind that, as George Kelling himself put it, under Giuliani "last year New York had 0.48 fatal shootings per 1,000 officers, the lowest figure since 1985." Never mind that "in 1992, when David Dinkins was mayor, more than 2,200 people were murdered in New York City—a high proportion of them minorities," as compared with just 600 under Giuliani in 1998 ("fewer," added Kelling, "than in Chicago, whose population is barely one-third of New York's"). Never mind that "sixteen hundred more New Yorkers would have died last year alone had crime remained at Dinkins-era levels."

In spite of all this, the demonstrators shouted themselves

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hoarse spreading the egregious lie that police brutality and trigger-happiness had run amok under Giuliani. The reduction in crime, went their mantra, had been achieved by a systematic violation of the rights of innocent "minorities."

Here, finally, I come to the reason I think that "evil" is not too strong a word to describe what is going on in New York. To quote Kelling again, this time on what might be characterized as the multiplier effect of the 1,600 lives saved by Giuliani's crime-fighting policies: "Calculate the . . . families spared grief, youths not imprisoned, and we are talking about thousands of New Yorkers whose lives have been immeasurably improved . . ." I contend that "evil" is precisely the right word for a campaign whose purpose is to undo so much good in order to resurrect a discredited ideological position and to reap a crassly partisan political advantage.

But will this evil drive succeed? Will New Yorkers once again allow themselves to be intimidated into tolerating the intolerable? I would guess not, and I hope not, if only because the taste of a better city is still fresh in their mouths. And yet so resolute is the evil will that has come into play here that I fear the worst.

If the worst were to happen, I myself might at long last give up on New York. Unlike Irving Kristol, I managed to remain here despite the loss of the intellectual community that made up *my* New York, and his, and I eventually built up a new life in new surroundings and with new friends. As befits the rapid advance of my age to three score and ten, and also suits my correlatively more reclusive habits, it is a less exciting and much less eventful life than I led when I was younger.

Still, in the past few years, there has been compensation in the resurrected pleasures of wandering about this great city that is my birthplace without having to avert my eyes from the sights of degradation that daily afflicted them not so long ago, or to look nervously over my shoulder after dark at the sound of approaching footsteps from behind, or to glance apprehensively at every street corner ahead.

"I'll take Manhattan/The Bronx and Staten/Island too./It's lovely going through/The zoo," sang Rodgers and Hart once upon a time. Once upon a time, too, Fred Astaire danced in Central Park under the lamplight at night, crooning as he leaped from bench to bench something like, "I like New York in June/How about you?" And later Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra jumped all over the place (to the choreography of Robbins) singing (in the words of Comden and Green and to the music of Bernstein), "New York, New York, it's a wonderful town/The Bronx is up and the Battery's down/The people ride in a hole in the ground."

Alas, we have not yet arrived back at that romantic technicolor pass, and perhaps never will. Yet at the moment, just strolling in that same Central Park on a sunny Sunday in the spring is to encounter so many delights—the kids scampering, the dogs running, the roller-bladers skating, the joggers jogging, the cyclists biking, the boaters rowing, the girls sunbathing, the musicians performing, and all with nary a frown in view—that it is hard to believe how dangerous this place (where an *80 percent* reduction in serious crime has occurred in the past six years) so recently was.

If, then, the evil designs of Al Sharpton and his ilk should prevail, New York might finally lose me. And that would of course be the least of so great a calamity. **NR**

Why Bibi Fell

Netanyahu is done in at last—not least by Washington.

DAVID BAR-ILLAN

An exclusive front-page story in the March 28 edition of Israel's leading Hebrew daily, *Ha'aretz*, caused an excited stir in Prime Minister Benjamin (Bibi) Netanyahu's office. A senior American official "speaking on condition of anonymity" was quoted by diplomatic correspondent David Makovsky as saying, "The Clinton Administration has decided to accept the position of Israel that it need not implement the second pullback from the West Bank under the Wye agreement until the Palestinian Authority has adhered to all its obligations . . ."

The anonymous official was the State Department's chief Middle East negotiator, Dennis Ross, with whom Netanyahu's office had pleaded to come out with that rare commodity in diplomatic discourse—the truth. His statement to Makovsky amounted to an admission that Netanyahu was not stalling the peace process, but merely insisting on Israel's right to demand Palestinian compliance before implementing further withdrawal. Since an anonymous statement is virtually useless, I asked Makovsky if he could get the statement on the record. He said he would try.

He failed.

Instead of being officially confirmed, the statement was contradicted almost immediately by State Department spokesman Jamie Rubin and later by secretary of state Madeleine Albright. In a message to the American Jewish Committee, Albright said, "On the Palestinian side, we have seen serious efforts to prevent terrorist strikes, to renounce the Palestinian Covenant, and to avoid a unilateral declaration of statehood. On the Israeli side, implementation has stalled, and, unfortunately, unilateral settlement activity has persisted. This is a source of real concern to us, because of its destructive impact on the ability to pursue peace."

Thus was the anti-Israel tilt complete. The Ross statement remained anonymous and worthless, while the Albright statement—a bald bit of disinformation—became the administration's mantra, part of an unremitting, smoothly orchestrated campaign aimed at causing Netanyahu's defeat at the polls. As John Broder put it in the *New York Times* on May 17, "[The administration] has made little effort to conceal its interest in a victory for [Labor candidate] Ehud Barak."

This was not the first time the Clinton administration had

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invested considerable energie in helping the Labor candi-
date in an Israeli election. In t e 1996 campaign, its endorse-
ment of then prime minis r Shimon Peres was quite
shameless. From the presiden himself, who made a special
trip to Jerusalem in support f Peres's candidacy, to then
ambassador Martin Indyk, wh harangued every Israeli and
American-Jewish leader he co ld buttonhole with pro-Peres
propaganda, the administrat n was totally committed to
defeating Netanyahu. But th e transparent, heavy-handed
tactics backfired. So this time round, instead of an outright
endorsement of Barak, the a ninistration preferred "active
measures" to discredit Netan hu. In the four months pre-
ceding the election, hardl a day passed without a
Washington story about Netar ahu's failure to keep his word:
on the Wye agreement, settl nents, building in Jerusalem,
and even on Israeli–Russian r ations.

FABRICATIONS

A classic example of this ca paign was a report attributed
to an American source by Is eli television correspondent
Emmanuel Rosen. Netanyah , charged Rosen, had asked
Congressman Ben Gilman call for the suspension of
American sanctions against F ssian companies dealing with
Iran. The request was part of a ecret deal Netanyahu had cut
with then Russian prime minister Yevgeny
Primakov, said Rosen, whi had made
Washington furious with Neta yahu.

The story was an outright abrication
that not only implied an int tion to
undermine American polic toward
Russia, but impugned Netany hu's loy-
alty to his own country. The harge was
palpably absurd. It was the Ne nyahu
government that had tenac usly
worked for more than a year per-
suade the administratio and
Congress to impose these sa tions.
After all, no one is more threa ned by
the transfer of nuclear and mi ile tech-
nology to Iran than Israel.

In this particular case, Ne nyahu
was able to debunk the charge lmost
instantly. At his request, I cated
Gilman through a cellular ph e as he
was climbing the stairs of the arliament
building in Madrid, and he a eed to deny
the canard to a tape recorder. Within an hour,
Netanyahu invited Emmanu l Rosen to interview
him, had him repeat the allega on, and gleefully surprised him
with Gilman's flat denial on t pe. It was one of the very rare
instances in which a refutatic was almost as effective as the
baseless allegation that had ne essitated it, and the irresponsi-
bility of a fiction-mongering jo rnalist was exposed.

Nor were the American ant Netanyahu efforts confined to
a disinformation campaign. The three American advisors
who ran Barak's campaign— listinguished for a systematic
invention of "facts" that rec lled the heyday of the Soviet
encyclopedists—were Clinto 's 1992 election crew: James
Carville, Bob Shrum, and S nley Greenberg. Carville told
the *New York Times* that he "regularly briefs the president on the progress of the Labor leader's campaign."

One can only wonder whether such presidential briefings included tales of dirty tricks. A puzzling episode at the beginning of the campaign involved two Watergate-type break-ins into Greenberg's Washington office. The insinuation of foul play was reinforced by the testimony of a cabdriver who told the police of Hebrew-speaking passengers discussing break-in plans on their way to the Greenberg office (presumably shifting to English—or Urdu?—for the benefit of the Pakistani driver). But this amateurishly manufactured affair quickly fizzled. The driver confessed he had invented his exotic passengers, and the FBI spokeswoman for the case admitted to a private investigator that "it was an inside job" and that the case had been ordered closed. An effort to have this admission repeated to an Israeli reporter failed.

The massive American intervention—including enormous financial contributions to Labor inspired by the White House—was undoubtedly effective. One administration official bragged to the *New York Times* that it had "clearly had an impact in Israel and the polling shows that." But by itself it might not have sufficed to defeat Netanyahu. Some homemade preelection coincidences, which seemed to occur at precisely the right time for Barak, added to Netanyahu's troubles. One such coincidence was the conviction a few weeks before the election of Aryeh Deri, leader of the Sephardic "Shas" party, following a nine-year trial on corruption charges. A partner both in the late Yitzhak Rabin's coalition and in the Netanyahu government, Deri has no permanent loyalties. But the press was quick to describe him as Netanyahu's ally.

Benjamin Netanyahu by Bob Bukin

Netanyahu, whose support among the Orthodox is almost total, felt obligated to stand by him despite the conviction. The embrace tainted him, perhaps irreversibly, among the immigrants from Russia who constitute a sixth of the electorate. For the mostly secular "Russians," the Shas bureaucrats—who control the Interior Ministry and regularly mistreat immigrants of questionable Jewish pedigree—are anathema. Following the verdict, Russian immigrant support for Netanyahu, which in January hovered at 75 percent, began a massive shift to Barak.

Yet even against all these odds, Netanyahu might have won had he succeeded in keeping the campaign focused on issues. If polls are any indication, his policies have consistently enjoyed the support of more than two thirds of the population, a degree of popularity he himself never reached. That he failed to change the course of the debate is a measure of the effectiveness of Barak's campaign, which pounded on Netanyahu's character to the exclusion of almost anything else, and of the rank amateurishness of Netanyahu's efforts.

It is no secret that in a popularity contest Netanyahu is vulnerable. Even his admirers admit that it is easier to identify him

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with Louis XIV's *L'Etat, c'est moi* than with Dale Carnegie's *How To Win Friends and Influence People*. Yet leaders far more arrogant than he have managed to overcome a reputation for insufferable egocentrism, inconsiderateness, and the unconscionable exploitation of others—and win elections.

If Netanyahu couldn't, it was mostly because of the unrelieved enmity of the press. I used to believe that this antagonism would help Netanyahu, by enhancing his antiestablishment image and populist appeal. But the constant calumny has had an insidious cumulative effect. Netanyahu's "villainy" and "duplicity" became axioms of political discourse. By the election, Netanyahu had become one of the world's favorite punching bags, the enemy of peace, a man devoid of principles and incapable of telling the truth. World leaders would privately admit to his charm, brilliance, talent, and negotiating skills. But in public almost none dared deviate from the politically correct perception of him as intransigent, unreliable, and dangerous.

THE NETANYAHU LEGACY

In fact, few leaders have been more consistent than Netanyahu. Unlike his martyred predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin—who was elected by vowing never to recognize the PLO, never to negotiate with Yasser Arafat, and never to offer to relinquish the Golan Heights, but reneged on all three—Netanyahu stuck to his election promises with exemplary firmness. He scrupulously adhered to the Oslo accords, but insisted that the Palestinians reciprocate by fulfilling their commitment to combat terrorism. With such reciprocity, he said, the Oslo principle of "territory for peace" might work. Without it, the formula would become the sheer insanity of "territory for terrorism."

The dramatic decline in Palestinian terrorism in the past three years is at least partly the result of this insistence on reciprocity. It is a considerable achievement, thought virtually unattainable not long ago.

Netanyahu also created a revolution in the thinking of Israel's "national camp." He was the first right-wing leader who made most of his followers accept the partitioning of the Land of Israel. His agreements with the Palestinians, unlike those signed by the Labor government, enjoyed overwhelming support both in the Knesset and with the public. It is now fashionably forgotten that the peace process collapsed in 1996, under Shimon Peres, following the worst two and a half years of terrorism ever to plague the state. All talks with the Palestinians were suspended and the withdrawal from Hebron canceled. It was Netanyahu who rescued and revived the peace process, affirming yet again the historic truism that only political hawks can gain the broad support necessary to make peace.

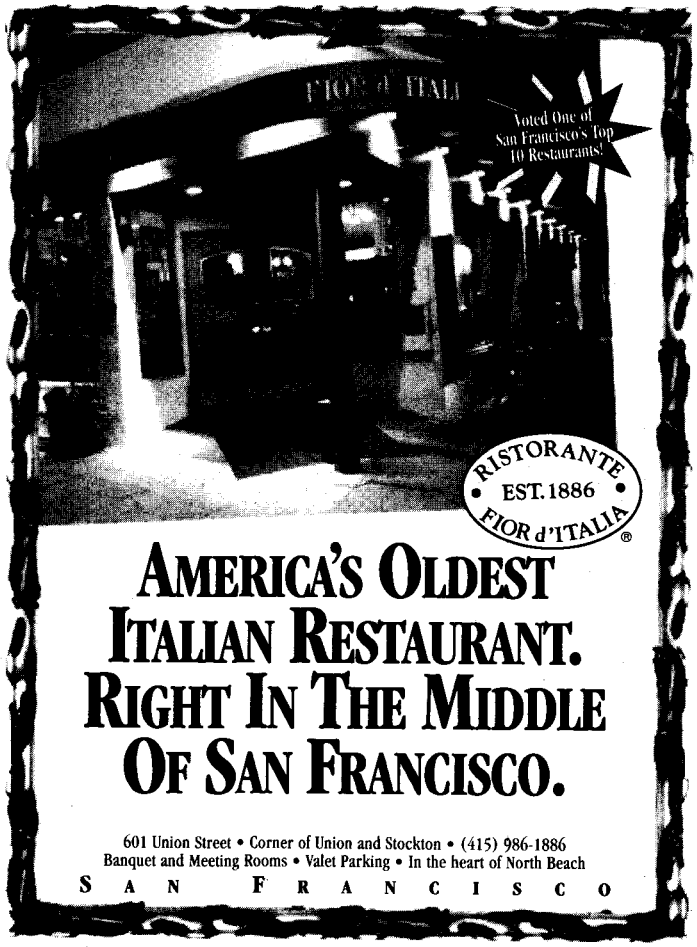
Netanyahu's achievements in the economic sphere were even more impressive. His government started moving the Israeli economy from irresponsible spending and stifling centralization to budgetary prudence and free-market principles. In three years it eliminated double-digit inflation, made unprecedented cuts in the national budget, dramatically reduced the trade deficit, privatized more than all previous governments put together, deregulated the currency, attracted more foreign investments than ever, produced 100,000 jobs, and survived the worldwide economic crisis—all without raising taxes.

Why, then, was Netanyahu defeated? Considering his achievements, the powers arrayed against him should not have prevailed. Neither American intervention nor a number of politically timed investigations of his associates—not even a campaign of character assassination—should have made the difference.

Seen in a larger context, Netanyahu's defeat may be understood as another in a series of setbacks for conservatives throughout the Western world: in Canada, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, and even in the last congressional elections.

Conservatives everywhere seem to be victims of their own success. With the disappearance of the Soviet Empire and the Communist threat, and with socialist economics deemed about as pertinent today as Sufism, they are left with few issues of mass appeal. The equivalent in Israel is Netanyahu's success against terrorism. He has proved that Arafat can control the terrorists and will do so if there is a price to pay for abetting terrorism. But the decline in terrorism reduced the Israeli electorate's concern for security. When Netanyahu ran in 1996, 70 percent of Israelis cited security as their number-one concern, which is why Netanyahu won then. Now only 27 percent do, which is one of the reasons he lost.

For conservatives to return to power they must rethink their agenda in terms of today's world. And they must build an effective intellectual infrastructure—in academe, journalism, think tanks, and literature—that will support and propagate this agenda. Nowhere is this truer than in Israel. **NR**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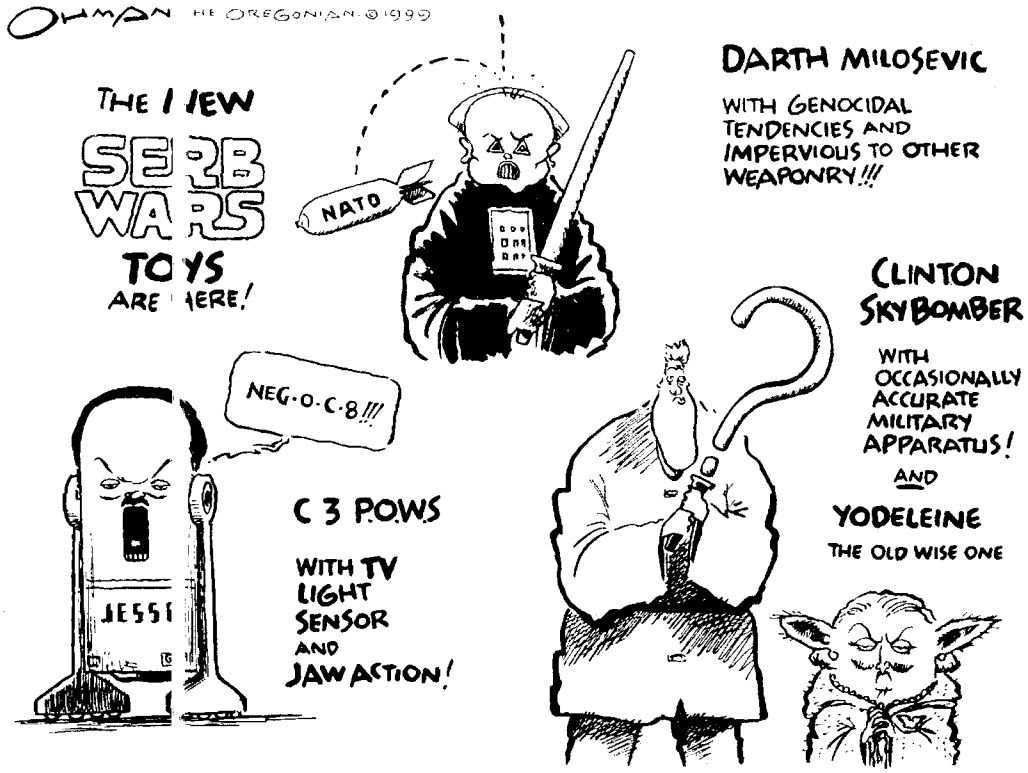

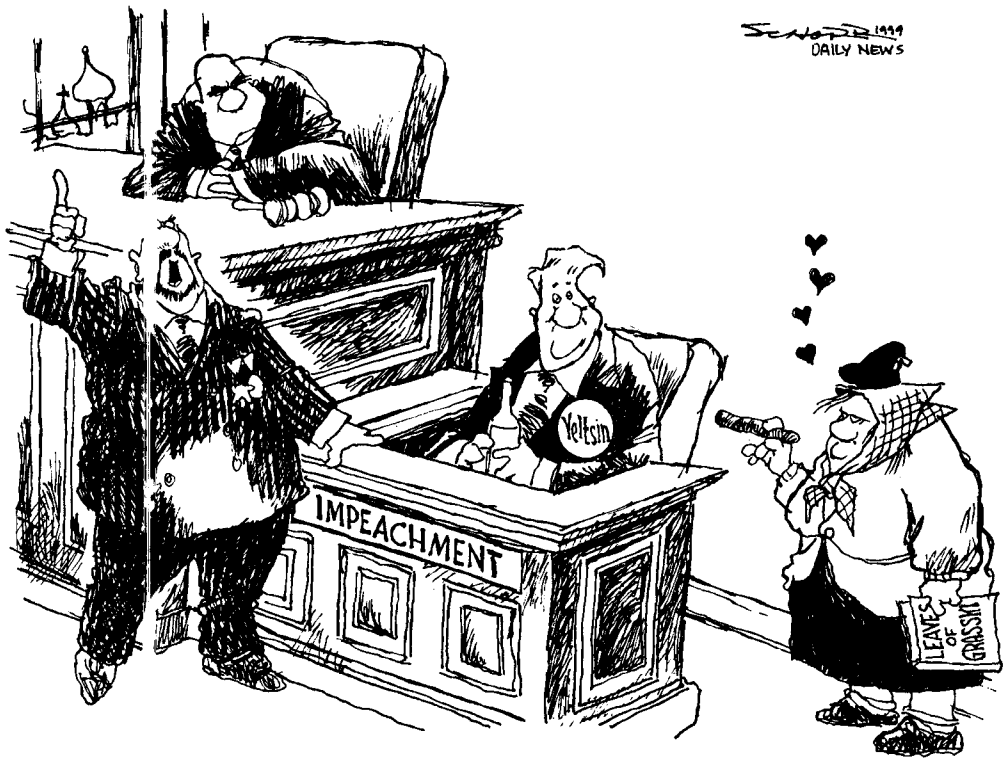

"...THE P' OSECUTION WOULD LIKE TO CALL A SURPRISE WITNESS..."

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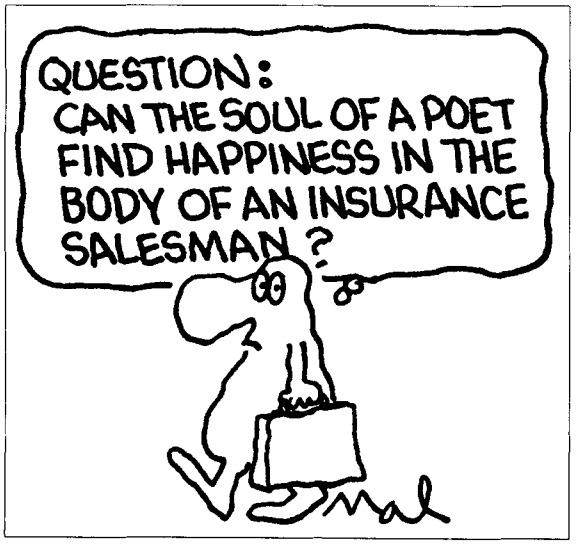
Rothco

"If I start getting optimistic, no more for me."

"You can't win—every time we earn a little overtime, it gets eaten up by inflation!"



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"I have a natural aptitude for parenting."

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ROBERT J. DOLE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

May 23, 1999

Dear Elizabeth:

What do you want ı e to do? Lie to the guy? He asks me a simple uestion: "Do you think your wife has a sh t at the nomination?" What am I suppose to say? Gotta answer with the truth, I gue s. Gotta answer.

So I tell him, "Too s on to tell." And it is. You ask me a question, I nswer it. That's just the kind of guy Bob Dole s. That's the kind of guy Bob Dole was when ou married him. That's the kind of guy Bob Dole is today. Not much Bob Dole can do abou it, I guess. Whatever.

I guess I didn't ha e to say that I thought about sending mone y to McCain. But I did. Not much. One gran t. Small amount, really. John's a friend. Ni e guy. Came out of the chicken coop in 'n am with his head still screwed on, not an easy trick. They kept him in that hotbox and whacked him with that hose kind of thing, guess. He's still got all the pieces. So may e Bob Dole sends him a grand. Don't make federal case.

So now you're m d. I can see your point. Not much I can do a out it. I've seen you mad before, you know. ou were mad during the '76 campaign. Mad luring the '88 campaign. Mad in '96. And y u're mad now. Only this time, you're mad a me, Bob Dole.

Well, come to thi k of it, you were mad at me all those othe times, too. Not much I could do about it hen. Not much I can do about it now, eithe .

But you know B Dole. And you know he feels bad for talkir ; out of school. He'll keep his mouth shut fr a now on, I guess.

You can stay mad f you want. Not much I can do about it. You'll s op when you stop, I guess.

I'm sorry or wh ever. Well, anyway . . .

Your husband,

Bob Dole

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

May 23, 1999

Dear Al:

A few days ago, someone from my office gave me a copy of a recent "interview" I allegedly gave to someone in the press.

I can't tell you how upset I was to read it. I never told anyone to "have fun," not one time. I did not express "reservations" or "pessimism" about your candidacy or its chances.

I'll say this again, and I want you to listen: I did not tell that reporter that your campaign was "in trouble," or that I was "concerned" about it.

Of course, this was all many days ago. I can't quite recall the entire interview verbatim. There may have been some things, which in the context of an interview on a whole range of issues, that may be seen, out of context and without the proper shading, to seem like criticisms or backstabbing or what have you. And if some things were said that should not have been said, or if I came off as unsupportive or pessimistic, let me be the first to say that I do not recall those specific instances.

You know, Al, that you have my full and unconditional support. Whatever was said in that interview by the person being interviewed—and if that person was the person writing this note, then let that person be the first person to take responsibility for it—you know that I have the deepest admiration for you and the highest hopes for your candidacy.

As we enter the threshold of the new millennium, let's all try to move beyond the politics of black and white—of yes and no—and see how all of us, working together, are stronger than anyone of us, working alone.

Have fun out there!

Bill

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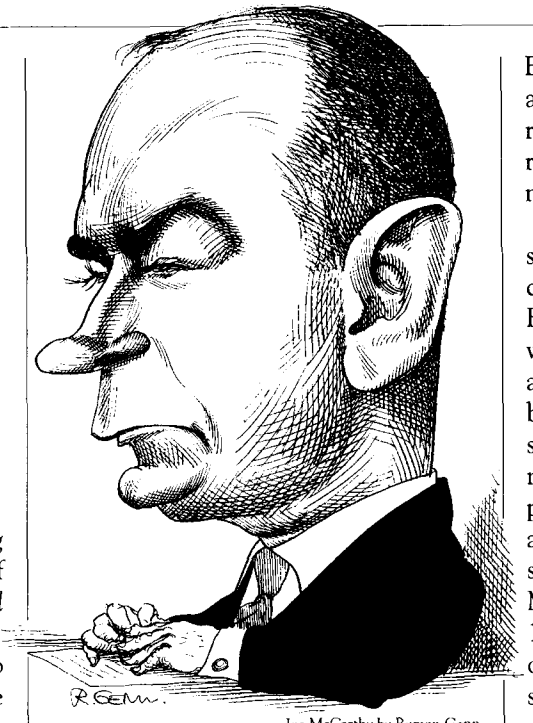
McCarthy & His Friends

TERRY TEACHOUT

The Redhunter: A Novel Based on the Life of Senator Joe McCarthy, by William F. Buckley Jr. (Little, Brown, 421 pp., $25)



Joe McCarthy by Roman Genn

IT is cold comfort to have lived long enough to witness the publication of such books as *Venona*, *The Haunted Wood*, and Sam Tanenhaus's biography of Whittaker Chambers, and to watch aging leftists scuttling to revise their memories of the Red Scare so as to take into account the awkward fact that many celebrated "victims" of the anti-Communist "witch hunts" are now known to have been Soviet intelligence agents or sources. To be sure, some have honorably acknowledged the terrible implications of what their right-wing contemporaries knew all along. But too many continue to play the great game of obfuscation, while not a few diehards cling frantically to their tired lies like a senile millionaire to his greedy mistress.

Still, much has been revealed in recent years about one of the darkest episodes in modern American history, and it is growing harder simply to pretend that the bad guys were good and the good guys, bad. With the guilt of Alger Hiss and the Rosenbergs finally established beyond even the most unreasonable of doubts, the Old Left has only one sanctifying symbol left to hide behind—but one that has not yet lost its power to intimidate. Forty-two years after his drunken death, liberals continue to play the Joe McCarthy card, and conservatives continue to fold their hands the moment it is played. By now, the late junior senator from Wisconsin is not merely a symbol but a cliché, which is why our ability to understand who he really was and what he really did has not advanced an inch. He is the black hole of anti-Communism: No matter how much scholarly light is shined on his life and work, none is reflected back.

Perhaps it is for this reason that William F. Buckley Jr., who knew McCarthy personally and in 1954 co-authored *McCarthy and His Enemies*, to this day the only intellectually serious apologia for his notorious activities, has now chosen to recall his old friend not in a memoir, but a novel—and a deliberately popular novel at that. Though *The Redhunter* is not short, I polished it off in a day, partly because I was intensely curious to see how Buckley would handle this historical event or that, but mainly because it is so wonderfully readable. Instead of an *All the King's Men*-like political epic, he has given us a witty, fast-moving yarn in the manner of his Blackford Oakes thrillers, complete with ventriloquial walk-ons by assorted great men (Dean Acheson and Dwight Eisenhower, here as in the Oakes books, are quite eerily plausible) and a decorous bedroom scene (in which, I am relieved to report, neither McCarthy nor Roy Cohn is a participant).

Even so, the feel of *The Redhunter* is substantially memoiristic, not least because it is told from the point of view of Harry Bontecou, a bright young fellow who served in World War II, returned to an Ivy League college, studied under a brilliant but crotchety associate professor of political science named "Willmoore Sherrill," worked on the school paper, did battle against Henry Wallace and his Communist-dominated Progressive Party in 1948, took a job as Joe McCarthy's administrative assistant in 1950, then reluctantly broke with him once it became all too clear that a deep-seated streak of irresponsibility was causing McCarthy to sink his own boats: "You're giving ammunition to the enemy that's going to hurt you and our position on the Soviet Union and for sure on the internal-security question. . . . you are, net, hurting the anti-Communist cause."

It goes without saying that Bontecou is based in part on the youthful Buckley (though there are other equally obvious sources, most notably L. Brent Bozell), and his fictional recollections open a window on a poorly understood aspect of American politics in the '50s. Much has been written by and about the ex-leftists who were seduced by Communism and later broke with it. But we have heard surprisingly little of the young intellectuals who did *not* touch pitch, who joined the anti-Communist cause solely out of the belief that it was a moral imperative. What drove them? More specifically, what led someone like Buckley to become close to someone like McCarthy? Was it simply a strategic alliance? Or was there something about Joe McCarthy that went beyond his being on the right side, a

Mr. Teachout, the music critic of *Commentary* and a contributor to *Time* magazine, is the editor of *Ghosts on the Roof: Selected Journalism of Whittaker Chambers, 1931–1959.*

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charisma that made him imp ssible to resist?

Working from firsthand k owledge and from Thomas C. Reeves's excellent 1982 biography, Buckley has ought to answer that question, with re ults that are both plausible and surpr ing. For though *The Redhunter* is frank y sympathetic to McCarthy, it is n kind of hagiography. Buckley's Mc arthy is "attractive, earnest, yet never oring or fanatical, courteous, and tho ghtful, a life lover who animated all sit ations in which he involved himself"— out he is also a rogue, a true believer v no nonetheless suffers from a fatal will gness to stretch the truth until it snap back in his face. And while Buckley suggests that Roy Cohn (and alcohol brought out the worst in McCarthy, he eaves no doubt that had McCarthy's ow character not been gravely flawed i the first place, Cohn's blandishmen s would have had no effect.

The only thing about uckley's McCarthy that fails to ring tr e is that virtually all of his bad beha or takes place on TV, or in the tran cripts of closed hearings; except for a ictionalized childhood incident, we ever see him bully anyone up close a l in person. This, too, is an essenti ly memoiristic failing, and as su h it is understandable. *The Redhun er*, after all, is not a biography, but a p tial portrait (in the Jamesian sens) of the McCarthy Buckley knew—a much a primary source as a novel— nd what we learn from it is valuable precisely because it is partial.

Though I continue to h pe that Buckley will give us a full-fled ed memoir, *The Redhunter* tells us muc of what he knows about the anti-C nmunist movement, and does so in a v y that is likely to engage the attention f a great many readers who might not therwise question the received wisdom egarding Joe McCarthy. I doubt it will persuade anyone that he was a great m , nor do I think that Buckley thinks h so. But it is impossible to read *The edhunter* without recognizing that he w s not the one-dimensional ogre of host e caricature but a complicated hum n being, not without charm and no without virtue, and to understand thi is to better understand what the '50 were all about. **NR**

The Spy Who Loved Him

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

The View from Alger's Window: A Son's Memoir, by Tony Hiss (Knopf, 256 pp., $24)

ALGER HISS was an accomplished man when he was sent to Lewisburg federal penitentiary in 1951 for lying about his past as a Communist spy. Then 46, he had been clerk to Oliver Wendell Holmes, shaper of FDR's First Hundred Days, Yalta negotiator, U.N. founding father, and head of the Carnegie Endowment. When Whittaker Chambers accused him of espionage, Hiss took his place among the most celebrated defendants in American history. No such luster for his son. "At 46," Tony Hiss tells us in his second volume of memoirs about his father, "I'd had one job and had been married for a couple of years; no kids yet. By the time Alger was the age I am now, his pre-Lewisburg existence was a thing of the past."

Tony Hiss has a habit of portraying himself as a loser, diffident to the point of paranoia. His childhood was wracked by nightmares, odd urges to throw himself under trains and off balconies, and various self-destructive "accidents." It's hard to think of a more depressing exercise than dredging up reminiscences of his monthly "don't-waste-even-a-drop-of-it" visits to his incarcerated father, and of Alger's attempts, in hundreds of letters, to get Tony back on the right track. And yet, it's clear that Tony Hiss developed a closeness to his father during his prison days that he never enjoyed before or after: "My world-traveling, dazzling, handsome, hardworking, so-often-away-from-home father, who, when home, had become my so-easily-monopolized-by-others father, had now been fastened in one fixed spot."

Mr. Caldwell is senior writer at *The Weekly Standard*.

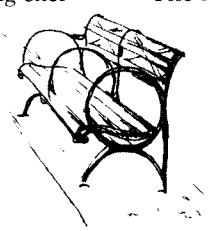
Perhaps rehabilitating well is the best revenge. Alger Hiss was a beloved inmate, particularly among mafiosi, whom he taught reading, astronomy, and geology, and who honored him as a "man of heart." They were right. Hiss's unwillingness to whine, while surely owing in part to a fear of further self-incrimination, also had in it a large measure of stoicism. "I of course have my share of boredom," he wrote, "but most of that comes from other men trying to kill time by aimless and rather pathetic chatter, not unique to prisons. But basically I find the concept of consciously killing time (a very literally true phrase, here) as repugnant and alien as ever. It strikes me as being partial suicide here as elsewhere." In prison, he entertained his son

■

Alger Hiss's prison term was an education in humanity —for himself *and* for his son.

■

with epistolary fairy tales, taught him about art (his favorites: Picasso, Manet, Cézanne, Berthe Morisot), recommended shows and openings that Tony could visit as his "eyes and ears," bucked him up with tender words of praise, and sought to make a man of him. ("The most admirable psychological trait displayed here seems to me to be moral courage," one letter runs.) Alger Hiss's prison term was an education in humanity—for himself *and* for his son.



The mistake at the heart of this book is its author's assumption that being a mensch, a Renaissance man, or a stoic is somehow inconsistent with being a Communist spy. In prison, Hiss did renounce a side of himself—exploitative, power-hungry, mean—that had frightened even his defenders. While that renunciation may well have had a spiritual component, a bigger factor, which his son cannot admit, was surely his having *retired*. A Communist spy who gets caught is in the same position as a pitcher who throws his arm out: He can believe whatever he likes, but he has become forever useless in his chosen line of work.

Tony Hiss never saw this, and still doesn't. In fact, having doubts about his

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father's innocence "was one of the few problems I *wasn't* wrestling with." The son calls Whittaker Chambers a "serial liar" and sniggers at those who have "drunk from the Chambers waters." He complains that Chambers's autobiography, *Witness*, paints Hiss as "a strange, misshapen, mean-spirited, unlovely person." *Witness*, of course, does no such thing. It paints Hiss as ultimately deluded, certainly, but every bit the dashing, principled, driven, tough, brilliant man described in this book.

Early on in *The View from Alger's Window*, it dawns on the reader that Tony Hiss not only knows nothing about Whittaker Chambers; he has a very shaky hold on the facts of the Hiss–Chambers case itself. This is an ignorance the whole family cynically cultivated. Just beneath the surface luster of ooh-ahh art connoisseurship and epigrammatic drollery was a modus operandi that was self-righteous, brutal, humorless, and antinomian. "There is a war on and the fight is to the death," Alger Hiss's brother-in-law Tommy Fansler wrote to him in jail. "The war is not a war between *haves* and *have nots* but between the grabbers and the givers, between the aggressives and the passives, between the haters and those who love. . . . You were much too clean, too forgiving, too gentle, too honest, too loving."

But the main love on display in the Hiss family is self-love, which in the case of Tony's half-brother Tim reaches megalomaniacal levels. "In a way, my troubles were of my own making," the latter recalls. "I was too honest." Too honest in revealing his homosexuality to Navy authorities, that is, which left Tim worried he'd be blackmailed if he testified against Chambers. But he should have done it anyway, Tim Hiss now thinks: "If I had testified, [then] it would have been three-against-two at any rate—my word added to Alger's and [Hiss's wife] Prossy's against the testimony of the two Chambers[es]." It is hard to tell which is Tim's greater delusion: his refusal to acknowledge that Hiss was convicted not on hearsay but on a mountain of *physical* evidence that has since grown to Himalayan proportions; or his belief that his own testimony would have changed the shape of the 20th century. Today, Tim Hiss believes that if he'd taken the stand, Alger Hiss would have been vindicated. Hiss would have stayed at the Carnegie Endowment, where he would have kept McCarthyism from happening, and moved on to the U.N., where he would have prevented the Korean and Vietnam wars.

One can condemn the crimes of Alger Hiss and remark his sons' delusions without faulting Tony Hiss for writing this book. In any civilized world, filial piety will—and should—trump ideological responsibility or historical accuracy. Indeed, one of the most curious things about Communists turns out to have been their consistent inability to triumph over their bourgeois feelings for their families. Whittaker Chambers was a famously doting father, and Alger Hiss appears to have taken his son's troubles deeply to heart while in prison. At root, there was a great deal about Communism that even its most hardened adherents couldn't believe for an instant. **NR**

Opus Two

JOSEPH BLOTNER

Juneteenth: A Novel, by Ralph Ellison, edited by John F. Callahan (Random House, 362 pp., $25)

SENATOR ADAM SUNRAIDER of South Carolina muses on his deathbed in one of this posthumous novel's many interior monologues. In the present time, about 1955, he thinks back to a time before he was born, June 19, 1865, when Union troops landed at Galveston, Texas, and their commander told the cheering slaves they were free. "'Juneteenth,' the Senator said, closing his eyes, his bandaged head resting beneath his hands. Words of Emancipation didn't arrive until the middle of June so they called it Juneteenth. *So that was it, the night of Juneteenth celebration*, his mind went on. *The celebration of a gaudy illusion.*"

Mr. Blotner, professor of English emeritus of the University of Michigan, is the author of biographies of William Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren.

One of the nation's most vehement anti-Negro politicians, Sunraider has been shot while addressing the Senate chamber. The assassin was a young black man who rose in the gallery from among a busload of South Carolina Negroes led there by Rev. Alonzo Z. Hickman, who happens to be the senator's foster father, a black Baptist preacher and evangelist so powerful that he is known as "God's Trombone." A huge musician, a rounder and a rambler in his youth, Hickman was led to God after an illicitly pregnant white-skinned woman knocked on his door one night just in time for him to deliver her child. Even though her false accusation of rape caused the lynching of Hickman's brother, Robert, and the death of their mother, she forces the child upon Hickman. His resistant acceptance of this charge saves him from bitterness and leads to his life of ministry. He names the child Bliss, for this is what the boy brings to Hickman even as he grows up in ignorance of his tragic parentage. Though his skin is light and his hair is straight, he is accepted as somehow black.

As Reverend Bliss, he becomes a prodigy as a child preacher, counterpointing Hickman's evangelistic sermons with his own. For Hickman and his congregation he is a symbol of God's promise until, rejecting his role at last and seeking his mother, he runs away.

Ellison's second novel is about liberation, resurrection, and faith.

Hickman keeps track of him through a network of friends as he undergoes a transformation partially recapitulating Hickman's own youth. Bliss becomes a con man, a bogus film producer, and finally achieves wealth and power as Sen. Sunraider, rabble-rousing politician. It is only with this Washington expedition of Hickman's congregation, lobbying for reforms, that the two men come together again at last as the senator is being transported to the hospital, mortally wounded. Ellison's method has been called antiphonal; and somewhat like the powerful statement-and-

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response pattern in church, t e conver-
sations and meditations of th two men
reveal the senator's attemp to find a
"way home."

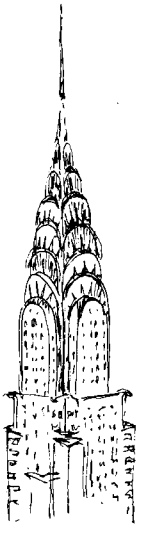
Ellison dedicated his nove "To That
Vanished Tribe into Which was Born:
The American Negroes." Th ugh *June-
teenth* is about liberation as ell as res-
urrection, it is not a nove of black
militancy. Though it celebrat s the kind
of independence Ellison w in his
namesake, Ralph Waldo Em rson, in a
more pervasive way it celeb ates faith,
the kind Ellison sees embodi l in "those
old Negroes whom I'm tryi to make
Hickman represent," he o ce wrote,
those who "never left the or ginal briar
patch."

The author himself was ot such a
Negro. Trained as a classical usician at
the Tuskegee Institute, E lison im-
mersed himself in modern lit rature and
found his vocation as a ort-story
writer and essayist. His ex aordinary
range extended to jazz as w l as tradi-
tional spirituals. He drew als upon the
profane, as in his use of "the dozens," a
traditional contest of rhyt ing abuse
and mutual defamation of e antago-
nists' mothers. He learned rom con-
temporary black writers nd drew
heavily as well on tradition elements
in black culture. Certain w ite writers
such as Joel Chandler Harri author of
Uncle Remus's tales of Brer Rabbit and
Brer Bear, also inspired Elli n in
the use of folk models as w ll as
20th-century symbolism.

But Ellison found his mo im-
portant influences in the reat
modernists, among them Eliot
and Yeats, Joyce and Fau ner.
Like Joyce, he employed syr bolic
objects and actions to add evels
of meaning in his complex arra-
tion and plotting. With his work
marked increasingly by fluic ty of
time sequence, he profitec from
Joyce's use of the stream-o con-
sciousness technique. Faul ner's
use of interior monologue p ovid-
ed the same kind of example while
the vast extent of his Yoknap taw-
pha saga appealed to Ellison n his ambi-
tious attempts to render th dilemmas
of characters immersed it history as
well as present time. In his use of leit-
motifs and patterns of imag ry, he prof-
ited not only from Eliot ar l Yeats but
from poets such as his friend Robert Penn Warren.

Ellison gave evidence of the mastery he had achieved with his 1952 novel, *Invisible Man*. Invisible because he feels he is seen only in terms of racist stereotypes, the protagonist tries to define himself as a unique individual and to reject the identities imposed upon him successively in the worlds of college, industry, and politics. After a series of brief illusory achievements, he encounters duplicity and exploitation that lead to disasters, climaxing in the chaos of the Harlem riots. He escapes by hibernating under the city street in a space he illuminates brightly by tapping the power-company line. At last, as he prepares to emerge, he tells the reader, "Who knows but that on the lower frequencies, I speak for you?" It is an extraordinarily rich, multifaceted, and powerful book, perhaps the best American novel in the post-World War II era.

After this triumph for Ellison, there occurred a legendary disaster. A novel planned in 1951 had grown to 368 pages. From this Ellison had extracted and published two stories in 1960, one called "And Hickman Arrives," with four more to follow including "Juneteenth" in 1965. In late November of 1967, a fire destroyed the Ellisons' summer home and with it his manuscript, a loss perhaps comparable only to that of the first book of Thomas Carlyle's *French Revolution*. By 1980 Ellison had reconstituted most of it, and he continued to write and revise until his death in 1994. With the cooperation of the author's widow, John F. Callahan undertook the Herculean task of arranging 2,000 pages of "his oft-revised, sometimes reconceived scenes and episodes according to their most probable development and progression."



Just as a reader expecting to find in *Finnegan's Wake* another, maturer *Ulysses*, or in *Absalom, Absalom!* another, older *Sound and the Fury*, may be disappointed, so he may find *Juneteenth* less coherent and powerful than *Invisible Man*. But he is also likely to find here the same richness, power, and complexity in the uniquely American voice of one of this country's most versatile modern masters. **NR**

The Missus

DICK MORRIS

The First Partner: Hillary Rodham Clinton, by Joyce Milton (Morrow, 448 pp. $27)

NOT everyone will want to read Joyce Milton's *First Partner: Hillary Rodham Clinton*, but one person definitely should: Hillary Rodham Clinton. Before she decides to run for Senate from New York, Mrs. Clinton would do well to review some of the unflattering biographical data that have been uncovered about her. This information will undoubtedly be recalled by her opponent and his partisans in any electoral contest.

The country already knows all about the scandals relating to her and finds them exhausting: Whitewater, commodities trading, Castle Grande, Travelgate, Filegate, Webb Hubbell's job offers, Gennifer Flowers, Monica Lewinsky, and the rest. Thus far Mrs. Clinton has never clearly answered the critical questions about her role in any of these. Instead she hides behind attorneys, soundbites, and the White House gates. That won't work in a brutal New York Senate race.

This is not a sensational book. Milton's research is neither impressive nor creative, relying on newspapers and other previously published accounts. Still, the portrait of Hillary Clinton she constructs is seriously at odds with much of the First Lady's carefully maintained image as an independent, tough feminist, brilliant lawyer, and gifted strategist who would have been a successful political figure on her own merit. Most striking is Mrs. Clinton's lifelong capacity to reinvent herself—from her hair and eye color to her personal history. Milton chronicles these reinventions with devastating accuracy.

One example: A major component of Clinton mythology, central to HRC's dual identity as feminist New Woman and self-abnegating martyr, has always

Mr. Morris, a political commentator for Fox TV and a columnist for the *New York Post* and *The Hill*, was for more than 20 years an advisor to Bill Clinton.

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been the story of how, after graduating from Yale law school, she forsook a promising career as a top-paid lawyer in a big eastern law firm to move to Arkansas and marry Bill Clinton. But that is not exactly how it happened. Milton reminds us that although Miss Rodham finished her course work in law one year before her beau, she hung around Yale for another year, taking classes in child development. There is no evidence that she received offers from any law firms, big or small. After Bill Clinton graduated and returned to Arkansas, she went to Boston—not to a prestigious firm, but to the Children's Defense Fund. After a short stint on the Watergate Committee, she applied for a job at the University of Arkansas law school. Yet, for years, her alleged "sacrifice"—of power and money—has been

■

The notion that Mrs. Clinton would have been a successful political figure without her husband is simply fiction.

■

continually cited by Clinton supporters, often to justify her involvement in shady financial deals.

A related legend is that of Hillary Clinton, killer litigator. Milton cites a 1992 investigation by *The American Lawyer* showing that Mrs. Clinton tried only five cases in her 15-year legal career. Not only that, Milton writes, for many years Mrs. Clinton was a part-time lawyer who frequently took leaves of absence to work in her husband's campaigns or to promote specific policy positions, as in education.

The First Partner makes clear that the notion frequently advanced by the Clinton spin machine—that Mrs. Clinton would have been a successful political figure without her extraordinary husband—is simply fiction. The Hillary Rodham of the 1970s was a very different person from the Hillary Clinton of the 1990s. She was not charismatic, she was abrasive. She was not conciliatory, she was dogmatic. Her style, her manner, even her appearance were off-putting—hardly the attributes of a winning candidate. Her later attempts

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to become a popular figure h ve ranged from unsuccessful to disastro s.

Milton makes another important point—that Bill Clinton as always been his wife's ticket upward nd that by the time his infidelities becar e too obvious to overlook, she had oo much invested in him to exit the marriage. Perhaps Milton is right to emp hasize this. Reinvented during her hus and's first term as the happily marr d First Lady, HRC played th it role until it was interrupted y presidential biographer Da d Maraniss, Paula Jones, a d Monica Lewinsky. Her curre it role is victim, wronged wife.

The chief lesson here is th it there is very little about M s. Clinton that she will not eith r change or modify as the situation requires. We can expect a new "new Hillary Clinton" soon. For he presumed Senate run, perhaps she will emerge as a reconciled Mrs. Clinton, usband by her side, or perhaps as a poin edly independent Hillary Rodham C inton. Of course, another lesson of *Fir Partner* is that some things about a pe son never change. In her most recent r ikeover as the understanding wife, M s. Clinton has said that she believes in reconciliation and forgiveness." Yet on e constant in her life has been an amaz g tenacity in holding grudges. What he future holds for Bill Clinton, if hi wife ever gets her way with him, is a ascinating question. **NR**

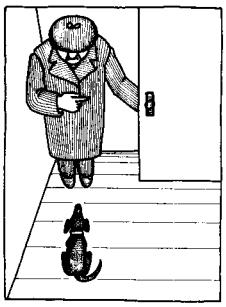
Nature Girl

RICHARD LOWRY

Woman: An Intimate Geograp y, by Natalie Angier (Houghton M ifflin, 398 pp., $25)

WHEN Harvard biolo ist E. O. Wilson first populariz d the theories of evolutionary psych logy in his 1975 book *Sociobiology*, fem ists had a fit. How could anyone ma ntain that differences between the sexe might not be easily erased cultural ar ifacts, but our very genetic inheritan e, "hard-wired" through millennia of natural selection? Incredulous women fought back: They picketed and disrupted Wilson's lectures and in one famous incident dumped ice water on his head.

This book, by *New York Times* science reporter Natalie Angier, proves that the feminist backlash has grown more sophisticated—but not much. In her introduction to *Woman: An Intimate Geography*, much of which is written as though meant to be read aloud at slumber parties, Angier declares: "I'm tired . . . of being told I mustn't let my feminist, pro-woman beliefs get in the way of seeing 'reality' and acknowledging 'the facts.'" In her book, she merrily lets those beliefs get in the way of both.



Much of *Woman* is a straightforward, if wince-inducing, celebration of the female anatomy. Angier surely has a point that ovaries are wondrous, and so are eggs, and so is breast milk, and on and on. But it's hard to take seriously a writer who praises another book as "ovarial." (Is "testicular" the corresponding term of abuse?) And a full chapter on the anatomical feature that, as they say on *Seinfeld*, "rhymes with Dolores" might strike most readers as "ovarial" in the extreme.

Angier impales herself on the classic contradiction of feminism, which is celebrating female differences while also arguing that women can do everything (including being brutes) just as well as men. It is in the service of the latter impulse that Angier tries to debunk the supposed excesses of evolutionary psychology. How we should regard sociobiology is an open question (see the NR symposium, March 9, 1998, "The Descent of Man"). But it has its uses, confirming commonsense notions of a fixed human nature that necessarily entail limits on social experimentation, e.g., changing sex roles. That's why Angier resists it with every evasion, misunderstanding, and laughable counterargument she can muster.

The dynamic that, according to evolutionary psychology, shaped human development is by now familiar: Women are a scarce reproductive resource, over whom men will fiercely compete. To simplify, the fight among men for status (and hence access to women) has made them physically larger, more aggressive, and more violent than women. Also, there have arisen deep differences in attitudes toward sex: Women will be much more cautious about sex (they have to worry about carrying a child for nine months) and anxious about the quality of commitment they can get from their mate; men will be more reckless, and concerned about the youth and health of their mate (to ensure that she can indeed bear children).

The evidence in support of this theory may not be airtight, but it is close. Males are the seducers in about 99 percent of animal species (in cases that are exceptions, the male makes more of a child-rearing investment than the female). When it comes to our closest relatives, the primates, the males are consumed with competition for rank—

It's hard to take seriously a writer who praises another book as 'ovarial.'

forming alliances, beating and sometimes murdering one another—and for the sexual access to females that comes with it.

Among human beings too, of course, men are undeniably the sexual aggressors. As Matt Ridley points out in *The Red Queen*, in no known human society do more than a few marriage proposals originate from women. It is men who most prize casual sex, consuming pornography and employing prostitutes. And it is men who fight for the sexual favors of women: In preliterate human societies up to a quarter of men were killed by other men, most often over sexual access.

Evolutionary psychologists are sometimes accused of telling "just-so" stories. Angier tells "just-not-so" stories. Men's taste for pornography? Well, women would have it too if only given the chance (never mind that the land is full of pornographers ready to cater to any taste, yet none has managed to find a market niche among women). The tendency of young women to couple with older, higher-status men? Well, that's

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because an older man will be "more grateful and gracious" (tell it to Donald Trump's castoffs). Surveys showing that men are much more likely than women to accept a come-on from a stranger? Well, what girl wants to be known as a "slut"?

Whenever Angier encounters something she dislikes—like the double standard by which female promiscuity is frowned on more than male carousing—she blames it on "nurture." But nature and nurture aren't so easily distinguished; if something is universally a feature of nurture, it probably has some basis in nature. As Angier's nemesis Robert Wright argues in *The Moral Animal*, men are probably programmed to find a promiscuous woman less desirable as a lifetime mate (on the theory that she is likelier to cuckold him). As Wright asks, "Can anyone find a single culture in which women with unrestrained sexual appetites *aren't* viewed as more aberrant than comparably libidinous men?"

Angier doesn't take up the challenge. She also tries to brush aside an extensive survey of 37 cultures around the world by scholar David Buss showing that men indeed tend to look for younger, more beautiful mates, while women want older, higher-status men. Angier falls back on the hoary argument that this is a result of a woman's economic disenfranchisement. But Buss's survey shows that women's desire for a high-status mate actually *increases* with their own wealth.

Angier would help her cause if she could point to one instance where it is women rather than men who seek status as a means to win the favors of multiple sexual partners. Where is the female version of the Inca sun king who kept 1,500 concubines? Angier inadvertently reinforces the point when she praises the sexual aggressiveness of Monica Lewinsky. What is Bill Clinton but a male who has devoted his entire life to achieving rank he can translate into sexual conquest? Would fearless Monica have bared her thong so readily had she encountered Clinton pumping gas in a Texaco jumpsuit?

The nature of polygamy and adultery brings us to the fatal flaw in Angier's project. She is making a plea for female solidarity: "It is maladaptive for women to continue on the course of she said/she said, the yowling and mud wrestling. We need each other now. The next phase of the permanent revolution needs an infusion of Old World monkey sorority." The problem is, outside of Tri Delt, there is no such thing. As evolutionary psychologists are not the first to observe, sex can be a complicated business, a dismaying arms race of all against all, involving power calculations and deception on all sides.

If men tend to be more polygamous than women, polygamy by no means benefits all men. If high-status males are monopolizing women by the hundred, many low-status males will miss out altogether. On the other hand, the concubines of the sun king (or the mistresses of the prime minister) might well be better off than if they had married an ordinary, faithful Joe. Monogamy and faithfulness don't benefit all women equally. So much for sisterhood. Who, after all, is likelier than Hillary Clinton to want to call Monica Lewinsky a "slut"?

The accuracy of Angier's attempts to find an ancestral precedent for her vision of "you-go-girl" sisterhood—in a hunter–gatherer society in East Africa, and in the liberal's favorite ape, the bisexual, promiscuous, and pacific bonobo—can be left to the experts. Suffice it to say her brand of feminism is probably a foolish fantasy, doomed to bump up against the "facts" and "reality" she waves off so nonchalantly.

But we should have at least some sympathy for Angier's motives. Not all efforts to rein in and divert our scheming, promiscuous ancestral brains are unworthy. Evolutionary psychology may tell us much about our nature. But as Katharine Hepburn says to Humphrey Bogart in *The African Queen*, "Nature, Mr. Allnutt, is what we are put in this world to rise above." **NR**

MacArthur Returns Again

JOHN J. MILLER

The Emperor's General, by James Webb (Broadway, 416 pp., $25)

At the conclusion of their first meeting, not long after Japan's formal surrender aboard the U.S.S. *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay, Gen. Douglas MacArthur and Emperor Hirohito posed for a photograph. The resulting image—the tiny, bespectacled Hirohito looks like MacArthur's butler—ran in newspapers all over Japan and did more to diminish the country's opinion of its royal head than even its recent military defeat. Yet as James Webb tells it in this history-meets-fiction novel, Hirohito had just won an important victory behind closed doors: MacArthur agreed not to prosecute the emperor for war crimes, despite pressure from the Allies to initiate a set

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James Webb's MacArthur craves admiration the way a truck craves diesel fuel.

■

of Nuremburg-like trials in the Pacific.

Preserving the emperor's personal dignity was one of MacArthur's chief accomplishments during the American occupation of Japan. Hirohito renounced the idea of imperial divinity, declared the people sovereign, and allowed the adoption of a new constitution. These steps, of course, were vital in helping to transform Japan into a postwar ally of the United States. Yet they came at a price, as Webb makes clear. Several of Hirohito's close associates, who were responsible for atrocities such as the Rape of Nanking, never had to show their faces in court. And at least one innocent man, the crafty but honorable Japanese general Tomoyuki Yamashita, was condemned to die as a scapegoat for the crimes of those protected by Tokyo deal-makers.

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The Emperor's General is r ally a kind of *Bildungsroman*, tracing t e military career of Capt. Jay Marsh, a ed-haired boy from Arkansas, from the landing at Leyte in October 1944 (" have returned," declared MacArth ır) to the occupation of Japan. Marsh, a 23-year-old whose story is told in the st person, starts out as an aide to MacA hur and a self-described SLJO ("sh*** little jobs officer"). He is a fluent Japa se speaker, however, and during the occupation becomes a top-level translator for MacArthur and an informal conduit between the general and the crown. At first, Mar is merely a "trusted listener" obser ing great events. But before long he's a intriguer with a private agenda that p its him at odds with both the America s and the Japanese.

Webb doesn't tinker too uch with what actually happened. A the first MacArthur–Hirohito enco nter, for example, only the emperor personal translator sat in; in Web s telling, Marsh is also there. Webb's urpose is not to write an alternative his ory, but to engage in modest speculatio about the motives that drove MacA thur and Hirohito. These have always een poorly understood, and Webb lls in the blanks with interesting, ofte Machiavellian, possibilities.

The book's greatest stre gth is the character of MacArthur. Th ough the eyes of Marsh, the general c nes across as one of the great men of his ory, a brilliant commander whose m ghty willpower carries his country to ctory and helps it secure a future pea e. Yet the bombastic MacArthur was n the kind of guy you would invite to a c kout. He craved admiration the wa a truck craves diesel fuel. He had a lo y sense of self-importance, even for a an in his position. Personal grievance interfered with his judgment. As a ps hological biography of a complex ma *The Emperor's General* is a solid succ s.

Webb also expertly descri es several famous scenes, like the motional reunion in 1945 between M acArthur and Gen. Jonathan Wainw ight, the man MacArthur left behi d in the Philippines to defend again t an irresistible Japanese offensive ("I shall return" must have been small comfort to the men who would soon face the Bataan death march.) Again, Marsh is present to observe. Webb's version doesn't unfold exactly as it did in reality—but it's awfully close, and arguably even an improvement.

If the book has a flaw, it's Marsh. Self-absorbed and morally obtuse, he is not a terribly likable character. In this way he mirrors MacArthur, even betraying his Filipina fiancée to a geisha girl and later abandoning her, just as MacArthur wrongly condemns the innocent Gen. Yamashita to a sham trial in the Philippines. Fortunately for readers, fascinating events and personalities surround this Marsh. It's a great backdrop—and, on these pages, the backdrop is the story. **NR**

■ FILM ■

Not Far Enough Away

JOHN SIMON

UNLIKE, say, intuition, imagination is not monolithic. There is the centrifugal and the centripetal kind. The former, and lesser, looks away from human reality to other, fabricated realities; the latter, and greater, burrows deeper into the reality we live in, discovering yet unexplored verities in its unsounded depths. Two archetypes of the greater imagination are Shakespeare and Proust; of the lesser, the hordes of mystery and sci-fi writers.

In the opinion of many movie fans, especially those whose puberty coincided with the first installment of George Lucas's *Star Wars* trilogy, those three films are the ultimate in cinematic science fiction, ahead even of Kubrick's *2001*. They attempt nothing less than the creation of a new mythology, if not indeed a new religion. And there is something to be said for new religions: they are less likely than the old ones to engender bloody conflicts all over the globe. On the other hand, lets not forget Jonestown and Waco.

I have never been a sci-fi reader, except for the Martian novels of Edgar Rice Burroughs, better known for his Tarzan ones. These books about the adventures of Captain John Carter, a Virginia gentleman on Mars, taught me as a 15-year-old much of my English. There is little if any technology in them: Carter does not get to Mars by building a spaceship; he simply stares at his beloved red planet one night and, *presto magico*, finds himself transported thither.

The half-dozen novels record his love affair with the lovely Martian princess, Dejah Thoris, planet-crossed by many evil forces (none that you would want with you), but ending in conjugal bliss. And Dejah Thoris does not look like some sort of weird extraterrestrial, but a supremely beautiful earthling, save that her skin is truly pink, whether shocking or Schiaparelli, as befits a daughter of the red planet. But, I suppose, when we can see Mars on our television screens, its magic is forfeit, and Lucas's exordium, "A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away," is understandable.

The new film's full title is ***Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace***, and it is, alas, to be followed by two more before we reach *Episode IV*, which is where the old *Star Wars* begins. The prequel was, it seems, already a gleam in Lucas's eye 20 years ago, though the actual writing didn't start till November 1994. If each installment then takes roughly five years to finish, we must count on *Episode III* not being completed before the year 2009. Which means that I, writing this, and you who are reading it, may not be around to savor the ultimate accomplishment, but will have to go to our graves with a gaping hole in our education—not to say our religion.

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George Lucas attempts nothing less than the creation of a new mythology, if not indeed a new religion.

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The situation is hard on the reviewer. On the one hand, I must not tell you how *Episode I* comes out and spoil your fun; on the other, I cannot pass any gen-

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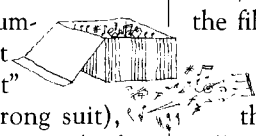
eralized judgment based on a first third, the mere groundwork or exposition for the two parts to come. Of two evils, I'll pick the lesser and express some strictures that five or ten years hence may land some egg on my face, provided my face is still around. But then, I may by that time have become as wise and venerable as Yoda, and who will dare lift a finger, let alone an egg, against me?

The events of *Episode I* are triggered by the heavy tax levied in that faraway galaxy by the "gigantic, commercial Trade Federation" that threatens the survival of "the small, peaceful planet Naboo," ruled by the lovely young Queen Amidala. She and Naboo are menaced "by the might of the wealthy corporate powers" that flout "the weak galactic government." Strange that Lucas, owner of Lucasfilm and the supreme special-effects house, Industrial Light & Magic, as well as many other corporations, should cast "those wealthy corporate powers" as the villains of his piece. Could the theogony and the ecstasy of our youth be born of mere self-hatred?



The Jedi Council, presumably synonymous with that "weak galactic government" (clarity is not Lucas's strong suit), delegate two Jedi knights to settle the crisis. They are the doughty Jedi master Qui-Gon Jinn and his bright and bushy-tailed apprentice Obi-Wan Kenobi. Lucas's very nomenclature is significant. Luke Skywalker was, of course, Lucas in excelsis; Princess Leia was a good lay, at least until Carrie Fisher was cast in the part. Kenobi must have been derived from cannabis, i.e., hemp, the inspiration behind much of *Star Wars*. Now Qui-Gon Jinn is most likely quick on gin, gin and hemp being the new nectar and ambrosia.

As for Queen Amidala, I'd say her name comes from the Yiddish, a *madela*, a girlie. Natalie Portman, who portrays her, as well as her decoy doppelgänger, is both Jewish and quite a girlie. The name of the beautiful 9-year-old blond boy, Anakin Skywalker (Jake Lloyd), derives, surely, from manikin, i.e., little man, and what a little man he is! He wins the grueling pod race, the Lucas equivalent of a car chase, doubtless also indebted to *Ben-Hur*.

There is not much human feeling in *The Phantom Menace*. Not much story either, although the press kit proclaims the "conflict between good and evil and between technology and humanity," which, in a parallel construction, would equate good with technology, evil with humanity. In the Lucas universe, this may indeed hold true.

Technology, by the way, has advanced quite a bit since *Episodes* IV–VI, the old trilogy. So, too, have hairstyles. When you now see sequences from the old *Star Wars* juxtaposed with the new, the contrast is jarring. To be sure, we are now in an earlier time in that galaxy, but why should its past look so much more our contemporary than its future? It is as if time there moved in reverse.

Speaking of reversals, Liam Neeson, who portrays Qui-Gon Jinn, was quoted in the press as disgusted with acting in a heavily digitalized movie—playing opposite computer graphics is like shadow-boxing—and said he was through with films altogether. At the televised New York gala preview, however, our Qui-Gon was quite gone on the film, whether merely out of tact, I can't say. But yes, in such a movie there is very little real acting, and the excellent Bergman actress Pernilla August, who plays Shmi Skywalker, the grieving mother who must give up Anakin to his high Jedi calling, comes to grief here: She acts, and thereby sticks out like a sore thumb.

Ewan McGregor, as the young Obi-Wan—who would've imagined he would grow into Alec Guinness?—is content just to be a Robin to Neeson's quasi-Batman. No Batman mask, though, to cover up Neeson's backward-sloping forehead, which evokes Edwin Markham's immortal question, "What hand smoothed back that bestial brow?" It may just be that one of those light sabers, with which the Jedi here duel for what feels like light years, clipped off part of his cranium.

The heartening thing about *The Phantom Menace* is that overwhelming armies of evil can be mowed down by a handful of stalwarts with computer-game ease because the Force is with them. "Feel, don't think," Qui-Gon counsels, and I can report that the second part of the advice was scrupulously heeded by the filmmakers. **NR**

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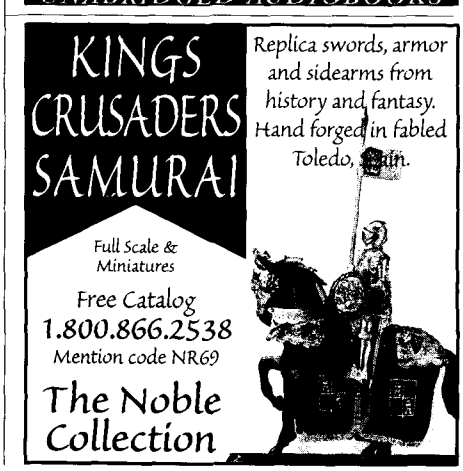

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■ CITY DESI ■

The U.N. of Motion

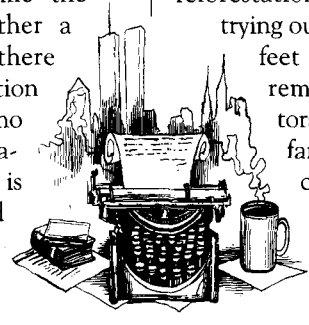
RICHARD BROOK HISER

ANY building that stands long time shows the passage fashion. Nothing in New York is as old as the Pantheon, but then we chan e our fashions faster than Romans do.

A block up the street fr m me is a four-story building of the l st century, with a gray limestone fron and a few modest doodads, which beg n its life as a German beer hall. From he end of World War II to the fall o the Berlin Wall, there was an East a d a West Germany. The 19th century had a West Germany too; it began on t e East Side of Manhattan and fanned t it as far as Minnesota and Texas. The city's Germans were staunch Republ cans, even when police commissione Theodore Roosevelt quixotically trie to enforce Sunday closing of thei cherished saloons. The saloon in my n ghborhood was decorated inside with xamples of German humor—a stained lass ceiling of crescent moons smoking igars; dark murals of toping monks. Ma be you had to be *da*. Like many New ork bars, it was an audience chamb for ward politicians. It was also where the young H. L. Mencken took three-stein lunches at the feet of the worldly music critic James G. Huneker, who discoursed (maybe even knowledgeably) on George Sand's lovers and Franz Liszt's warts.

According to the last census, German Americans are the largest ethnic group in the country. But the world wars cleansed them of ethnicity. German-language newspapers closed, Müllers and Brauns became Millers and Browns. At the saloon the monkish murals grew darker as the humor got dimmer. Trying to refresh the formula the building opened a jazz club in its basement and redecorated the bar; at one point a huge toy gorilla on a swing hung over it. The only remaining link to the building's past was through its taps: German Americans had more than one brew to give for their country.

A fire gave the last call at the bar, and the smoke-stained limestone sat, like a child's smudged face, while the neighbors wondered whether a new tenant would get there before the wreckers. Salvation came from a restaurateur, who bought the shell for his avocation, not his vocation, for he is a devotee of martial arts, and he converted the building to studios offering classes in movement and fitness.



Now moons and monks look down on classes in African dance, Brazilian martial arts, and (from India) four kinds of yoga. There are classes in t'ai chi, a Chinese system of stylized martial-arts movement that seeks to channel physical and spiritual energies. A related form, *chi gong*, has been in the news lately in China because of difficulties arising from the claims of a leading practitioner there. I first learned of this story from a friend in the city who said that the leader had a mandate from the "masters" to diffuse the practice more widely. These masters are dead, or unborn; at least, they don't communicate by phone, not even cells. My friend had no trouble with the concept of otherworldly masters; he only questioned whether they had delivered such a message. People in China were less skeptical, and the leader soon had 60 million followers, which caused the Communists some unease until we bombed their embassy in Belgrade and rechanneled that energy.

The U.N. of motion has one German delegation, a class in the method of Joseph Pilates. Pilates was a gymnast and hospital worker firmly grounded in the here and now: He found that he could rehabilitate injured patients by devising exercises that used the tension of their bedsprings. In time he designed a series of spring-tension machines with evocative names (Wunda-Chair, Cadillac, Reformer) for the healthy. Using Pilates machines is quite different from working out in a normal gym. Gym equipment concentrates on either the push or the pull. Pilates machines work both on thrust and stretch. Gyms bulk you up; at the extreme, you stop fitting into blazers. The Pilates method is supposed to lengthen you out. As soon as the old saloon began offering classes, the neighborhood coffeehouses filled up with willowy dancer types, as if there had been reforestation. My wife, who has been trying out the method herself, was 5 feet tall when she started, and remains 5 feet tall. But her torso does look elongated. As far as the old saloon is concerned, it's a long way from Pilsen; New York burghers in the 1890s were tallest when they lay on their backs. Yet Herr Pilates might have fit in as well then as he does now; he gave instruction in a bathing suit, gripping a can of beer.

His method is very hot right now, in studios far beyond the old saloon, which cater, not to neighborhood enthusiasts, but to lost beautiful people. (Call them Julia Roberts, though their name is legion.) You would think they were tall enough already, but apparently every half inch helps when you have zero self-esteem. John Milton, also a reformer, would shake his head.

For what admir'st thou, what transports thee so,
An outside? fair no doubt, and worthy well
Thy cherishing, thy honoring, and thy love,
Not thy subjection . . .

Meanwhile the monks and the neighbors wait for the next thing. **NR**

Mr. Brookhiser, an NR senic editor, is author most recently of *Ale ander Hamilton, American.*

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

The Honored Gu st

NEW YORK, MAY 4

WHATEVER privacy t e White House Corresponde s' annual dinner once had is explicitly orfeited—C-SPAN ran the whole thing his year. It is a mammoth affair, 2,700 se ted diners. It begins at 6 P.M. and the firs course was served at 8:45. It is very ifficult to assemble at a single affair 2, 00 people, many of whose names are n st familiar to readers of *People* mag ine. It is Peacock Alley time and pe le wander about to see and to be seen. ll of this is before the President of the U ited States comes in. On Saturday, M r. Clinton arrived after the awards or distinguished work in journalism h been distributed. The reason for his ateness, it was reported, was Michael sikoff. He was the journalist, w king for *Newsweek*, who broke t Monica Lewinsky story, or almost di President Clinton did not want to sit te himself as one of the people who h to shake the hands of award winne s. He'd as soon have clasped the hand f Kenneth Starr.

The entertainment that ame later included remarks by a comedi n, or in this case a comedian manqué. Br n Williams of NBC drew heavily on r nch to do what he thought were his luties. His excuse, one supposes, is tha it's almost impossible to talk to 2,7 0 people, President Clinton seated 18 ches away, avoiding the temptation to ake references to such as fornicatior cigars, interns, and Gap dresses. The p esident followed with some lines tha were very funny, and ended with a pitch for his policies in Kosovo. After that me a half-hour of songstress Aretha F nklin, who had the big cosmopolitan cor pany in the palm of her hand.

The most interesting feat re of such evenings is the invitation lis Last year, Paula Jones was invited by som body or other. The kink-winner this time around was John F. Kennedy Jr., who invite Larry Flynt.

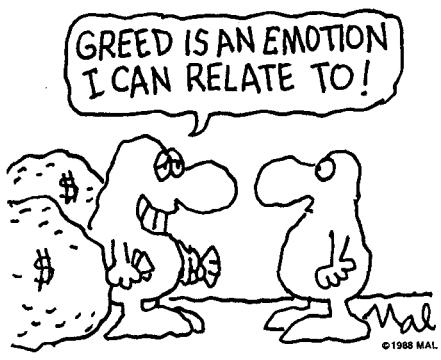
It is doubtful that ten gues that night had bought current copies of is magazine (*Hustler*). This is a magazin bought by pubescent boys with untempe ed curiosity about sexual perversions, a l by adults with insatiable curiosity abou sexual perversions, "adults" who would ead monthlies serializing the Marquis de ade, if they were more literate. Larry Flynt's most recent enterprise is a cinematic offering called *Jail Babes*. It is a tape (the first of a series) that will feature every month a session with female ex-cons describing their crimes and life behind bars before engaging in steamy hard-core sex.

Now the survival of sadistic sex doesn't surprise—it is a social pathology. But the question was asked by more than one guest the other night, "What does John Kennedy intend, by inviting Larry Flynt as his guest?"

If there is another answer to that question than: To shock everybody and draw attention to himself—come up with it, and send a copy to Professor Arthur Schlesinger, to file for his next exonerative bulletin on the Kennedy family.

One guest, endeavoring to answer the question Why?, recalled the extraordinary issue of *George* magazine (founded and edited by JFK Jr.) which last year drew attention by exhibiting a picture of Kennedy apparently nude, "artfully seated [showing] only limbs, chest, and face as he ponders a dangling apple," in the words of the AP. What made him do *that*? Has he got a problem?

Moreover, in the same issue of his magazine Mr. Kennedy was delivering a Pecksniffian lecture to assorted cousins for licentious behavior. Cousin Michael had been exposed as having seduced his babysitter, and of course Cousin William had stood trial, accused of raping a guest at the family compound on Good Friday. JFK Jr. wrote in his magazine that these Kennedys were "poster boys for bad behavior." The AP story went on to list other Kennedys who gave steady way to the call of the flesh, but not any other Kennedy who would seek the public company of the nation's primary pervert. At Saturday night's dinner Larry Flynt did not have to draw attention to himself by showing a picture of a woman in bonds shrinking before an assailant brandishing an egg beater—he could instead lean across and tell this poster boy a joke.



People do a lot of things to bring attention to themselves and their wares. People don't do enough to register their disgust with the extremes to which some go.

Money for Littleton?

NEW YORK, APRIL 30

IT is understandable if many of the aggrieved in Littleton have found themselves deprived of perspective after the event of April 20. But those removed from the scene can reflect on the reaction of President Clinton the day after the event. His first words were consoling and commendable. What came later underscores the vulgarity to which he is disposed, suggesting the role of the lord addressing his vassals.

What he went on to say was that he would dispatch $1.5 million to "aid" the victims of the Colorado school shooting. This CARE package, he wanted it understood, was only a preliminary endowment. More would come later.

What is the money for? "Funerals, uninsured medical expenses, lost wages, and counseling." The funds are drawn from something called the federal Crime Victims' Fund.

We are entitled to ask: What are the rules governing the distribution of federal funds for funerals of victims? Unhappily, there are a great many victims in the land. A very few of them are victims of armed schoolchildren. Early in the week one man in New York was shoved into the way of an oncoming subway train and lost both his legs. By any standards he is a victim. Why does he not qualify for relief from the federal Crime Victims' Fund? How many teenagers are killed every year in automobile accidents? Is this Washington's business? More particularly, is it the business of the president? What criteria will he observe?

The next question an accountant with responsibilities for the exchequer would ask is, "How did Littleton, Colorado, become a federal concern?" It is not obvious that the episode revealed a tumor in U.S. social life that needed legislative excision. The president made some accompanying references to gun control, as one might have expected. But his reference to the money he was dispatching has alarming implications. He said that it would be

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an initial payment to help the students, teachers, and parents "on their long journey toward recovery." Is a contribution to help to pay for funeral expenses a rung in the ladder to recovery? Would an additional $1.5 million constitute a second rung?

Mr. Clinton is hard to slow down when he is fired up by the springs of human misery. "The images from Colorado have become painfully familiar—the terrified children, the racing ambulances, the grieving families." That comment absolutely requires the rejoinder: No, such images as Littleton's are *not* painfully familiar—because they are extraordinarily rare. There have been not more than a half-dozen episodes in the past several years that can be thought in any significant way similar—students murdering other students. If they were as familiar as Mr. Clinton suggests, they would be workaday, in a category with automobile accident deaths, barely noticed in the newspapers. We can be truly grateful that the Littleton episode (like Jonesboro) can be classified as incomparable; unique, even.

And on the assumption that the grief-stricken parents needed help with funeral expenses, what are we to make of the implicit assumption that help of that kind was not to be proffered by other agencies of concern? At Littleton there are churches. And businesses. And neighbors. If the needs of the stricken overstretched the resources of the immediate community, there is Denver, a brawny, robust, metropolitan city which affords such amenities as an opera company. Why wouldn't Denver come up with material aid for the deprived, if Littleton couldn't handle the burden? Because nobody asked Denver. Clinton came in with his act of preemptive philanthropy.

It is the Caesarist impulse, the self-vision of the seigneurial omnipresence in Washington who is there to send in the Hallmark card, with a few florins. We get sore, here and there, at the libertarians with their anti-statist convictions, sometimes rendered as mere postures. But Mr. Clinton has here given us a double-barreled shotgun blast at the principle of subsidiarity, the solemn commitment we used to feel for leaving to the least echelon of government the responsibility to help in a crisis; and the corollary, that government should step in only when the resources of the private sector are insufficient, or the community spirit unwilling.

There has been no such suggestion in Littleton. The grief is endemic, wholehearted, wrenching. The purity of spiritual mortification is violated by cash tips from the White House.

What Are Our Bombers Thinking?

NEW YORK, APRIL 27

WHAT will be the impact on the greater Serbian community of the 50th anniversary celebration of NATO? The leitmotif in Washington seemed to be tapping out, *No ground forces.* They will not be necessary. The bombing will carry the day.

How is this news received in Belgrade? Milosevic welcomes it, of course. Armies on the ground are decisive military presences and such things end up happening as happened in Stalingrad in 1942 when one winter day the word went out: Surrender, or be wiped out.

Bombing is the more tolerable alternative. Just the other day, Professor John Kenneth Galbraith reminded the U.S. community of the survey he and George Ball undertook right after the Nazi surrender: The Germans, Galbraith/Ball concluded, had hardly noticed the impact of the bombing, in terms of keeping their military machine in order. The Germans presaged those techniques by which the Viet Cong 20 years later simply rebuilt bombed-out bridges in two or three days. The current mission of the television people in Belgrade is to rebuild the television transmitters every now and then. At this writing, one reporter tells, Greater Belgrade has not been without its television for more than three consecutive hours.

It should not surprise that when desultory bombing becomes the practice, opportunistic well-wishers will rise from the ground. Some will ask that Tuesday's barrage should be so kind as to shelter the stadium at Atjke, since on that Tuesday a soccer game will be held. Pope John Paul II sent a request to NATO for a ten-day pause in bombing, from Roman Catholic Good Friday through the Serbian Orthodox Easter Sunday. The Italians argued for accepting the Pope's request but wanted to hear more from the other members, the Americans, British, and French, who argued against the pause.

You will not guess how the question was decided—unless you read carefully Tuesday's *Wall Street Journal* dispatch. "The Dutch argued that there would be a chilling irony in Christian nations taking a pause in the war while Muslim victims—Kosovo's ethnic Albanians—were still being slaughtered. Poland, one of NATO's three new members, pointed the way out: It delicately suggested that the Polish-born pontiff's words needed to be taken seriously, but invited NATO military leader General Klaus Naumann to give advice. The scholarly German officer warned that the Serbs would use the ten days to rebuild their defenses, making it far more dangerous for NATO pilots once the attacks resumed."

When General Clark asked permission last month to bomb Serb headquarters in Belgrade, "Germany's NATO delegation agreed—as long as the missiles weren't launched on April 6, the 58th anniversary of the Nazi carpet bombing of Belgrade. The two ministry buildings were hit instead on April 3. The alliance has threaded its way through such internal political minefields with a fair degree of success and unity."

We call that Administrative Heaven. You pour into a great pot, the anniversary of the great bombing by the Nazis, the Papal request for peace during Holy Week, the day Hitler was born, perhaps a holy day or two from the Muslim side, and edit out your instructions to the Air Force.

There's something dirty about the entire operation. In most direct terms, it is not geared to the safety of the population whose protection took us into the war. The Kosovar Albanians are a dispossessed people, so much so that it cannot even be argued confidently that tribal and traditional ties could be reconstituted, such is the diaspora of the last month.

But we are taking satisfaction from dropping bombs here and there. We make it a nice point to relay sufficient signals so that they can get the Rembrandt out of the way, and also the technicians. Our aim is to keep the foul broadcasts from going out, not to damage the people who put the foul reels into the transmitters.

It is clearly time for the moralists to convene. Heavy questions abound. The soldier who is attempting to rape or kill is cut down with maximum satisfaction. A truck is carrying ammunition to that forward garrison. We shoot the driver because of a basic commitment to supply and demand. Somebody has to build the trucks on which the ammunition is carried to the front, so they are fair game for the bombers.

Almost without exception, instruments of war can be used as instruments of peace. So what do we see there? The transmogrification of airplanes, trucks, bombs, gunpowder into the machinery of destruction. It is incorrect to assume that when you espy the head of the hydra you can snap it off and rest content: In Serbia this hydra is indeed many-headed.

It is a hard day to be a general. To be a general who takes instructions from such as Mr. Clinton is to know true sorrow.

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FLORENCE KING

UNLIKE book reviewing, b ok blurbing is based on that deathl ss feminine principle: "If you can't sa something nice, don't say anything a all." This would seem to disqualify me it I've been blurbing books for a quarter f a century now. I was born to blurb thar s to a sour-tempered honor that man ested itself when I was six.

One day as I was thumb ng through *Collier's* I came to a celeb y endorsement of a then-revered prod t.

"Look, Mama! Ben Ho n smokes Luckies same as you."

"Oh, that means nothin They pay him to say that."

As she explained how t e endorsement business work I went into full glower. The truth about Santa Claus hadn't bothered me a bit but this was different.

"I don't like Ben Hogan," mut-tered darkly.

"Well, plenty of people do, nat's why they put him in the ad."

"If he doesn't mean it, he s ouldn't say it."

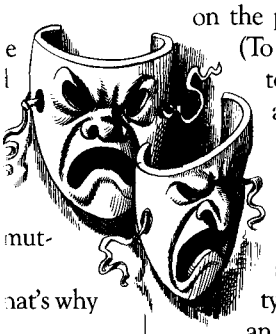
The first rule of the blu b business resembles the first rule of Pe tagon busi-ness: "Don't call it a war." Th publishing equivalent is "Don't call a blurb." Privately everyone does but fficially it's called a "comment," or more lescriptive-ly, "A word from you . . . " as n: "A word from you will call attention t this impor-tant book."

Requests for blurbs come f m the edi-tor or the publicist of a book i production and are usually based on the a thor's list of good blurb prospects—i.e., fr nds. Think of a bride registering her silve pattern.

Fax machines and e-mail d not exist when I started blurbing so I a ways replied in a gracious letter beginn g, "Thank you for giving me the opport nity to read . . . " I was so polite, but, t extend the marriage metaphor, kissin' don't last. Discovering that blurbing co d adversely affect my income I devised a rm letter:

> The books that make peop think of me when they need a blurb tend to be the same books that make literary edi-tors think of me when they assign reviews. Since blurbing a book obli-gates me to eliminate myself as a review-er, I am put in the position of working against myself.

At this stage of the game I was review-ing regularly for the *New York Times*, where they give you a lie-detector test if they even suspect you are friends with an author. Otherwise, invoking the blurb–review clash was merely a tactful ruse to get out of blurbing static Southern novels in which three generations of women sit on the porch and talk for 400 pages. (To get out of reviewing them I told *NYTBR* that I had been asked to provide a blurb.)



Between the Southern-blurb mafia and the rampant confu-sion that typically prevails in publishing houses, my tact soon collapsed. I reverted to type when I was asked to blurb an oral history about Elvis Presley by a woman who had once interviewed me. The editor said they needed a "quick response" because they were behind schedule, the reason for the delay being that the manuscript was 1,400 pages, but he promised I would be "caught up in the whirlwind of nonstop excitement" the moment I started reading the "enclosed" advance copy. But the letter was in an ordinary business envelope and the post office had no packages for me.

I fired off a typical snappish reply: "I have written so much about my own very differ-ent musical tastes that my blurb on any-thing to do with Elvis would be laughable."

My most embarrassing experience? Finding my 1980 blurb recycled in 1995 by an author who has gotten progressively worse with each book.

My most heartbreaking experience? "Andrew Ferguson's wry worldview, understated wit, and economy of style make him the Buster Keaton of the cul-tural essay" was how I blurbed *Fools' Names, Fools' Faces*, but "understated" was misprinted as "understanding" on the dust jacket.

My craziest experience? The woman who sent me her huge manuscript with a letter saying, "Here is your chance to share in this historic publishing moment by promoting my groundbreaking book." There was no SASE so I threw it in the post-office trash can. A few weeks later I got another copy and another bumptious letter: "Out of all the prominent authors eager to comment on my book, I have chosen you." This time the trash can was overflowing with discarded junk mail so I left the tome on the table, but on my next trip a postal clerk gave it back to me, explaining that he had seen me walk off without it. He was so proud of having sal-vaged it that I hated to throw it away in front of him, so I took it with me to put in a public trash bin. But there wasn't any. I could have sworn there was one on the corner but now it was gone. I ended up shleping a seven-pound manuscript through downtown on a broiling hot day, looking for a can. Finding one at last, and by now in a towering fury, I stood there slamming chunk after chunk of manu-script into its maw. A week later the story was all over Fredericksburg that my latest book had been rejected and I had tried to set fire to it on Caroline Street.

My favorite blurbs? Probably this schizoid pair. *A Nation of Victims*: "Charles Sykes's acridly funny exposé of those solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, hud-dled [m]asses known as the American People warmed my compassion-deprived, differently sensitized heart. This book is the best news I've had since Ayn Rand came out in favor of factory smoke."

Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe: "Watch out for Fannie Flagg. When I walked into the Whistle Stop Cafe, she fractured my funny bone, drained my tear ducts, and stole my heart."

A writer I would love to blurb is Christopher Hitchens. I know, I know, he attacked Mother Teresa, but I have rel-ished his writing ever since we were regu-lar reviewers in *Newsday*'s daily book sec-tion. I was Tuesday, he was Wednesday: ships that pass in the night, or more likely, trash-compactor buddies like Steve McQueen and Ali McGraw in *The Getaway*.

I've already written the blurb: "If Christopher Hitchens is a Marxist, I want to be one too." NR

Miss King can be reached t P. O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, Va. 22 04.

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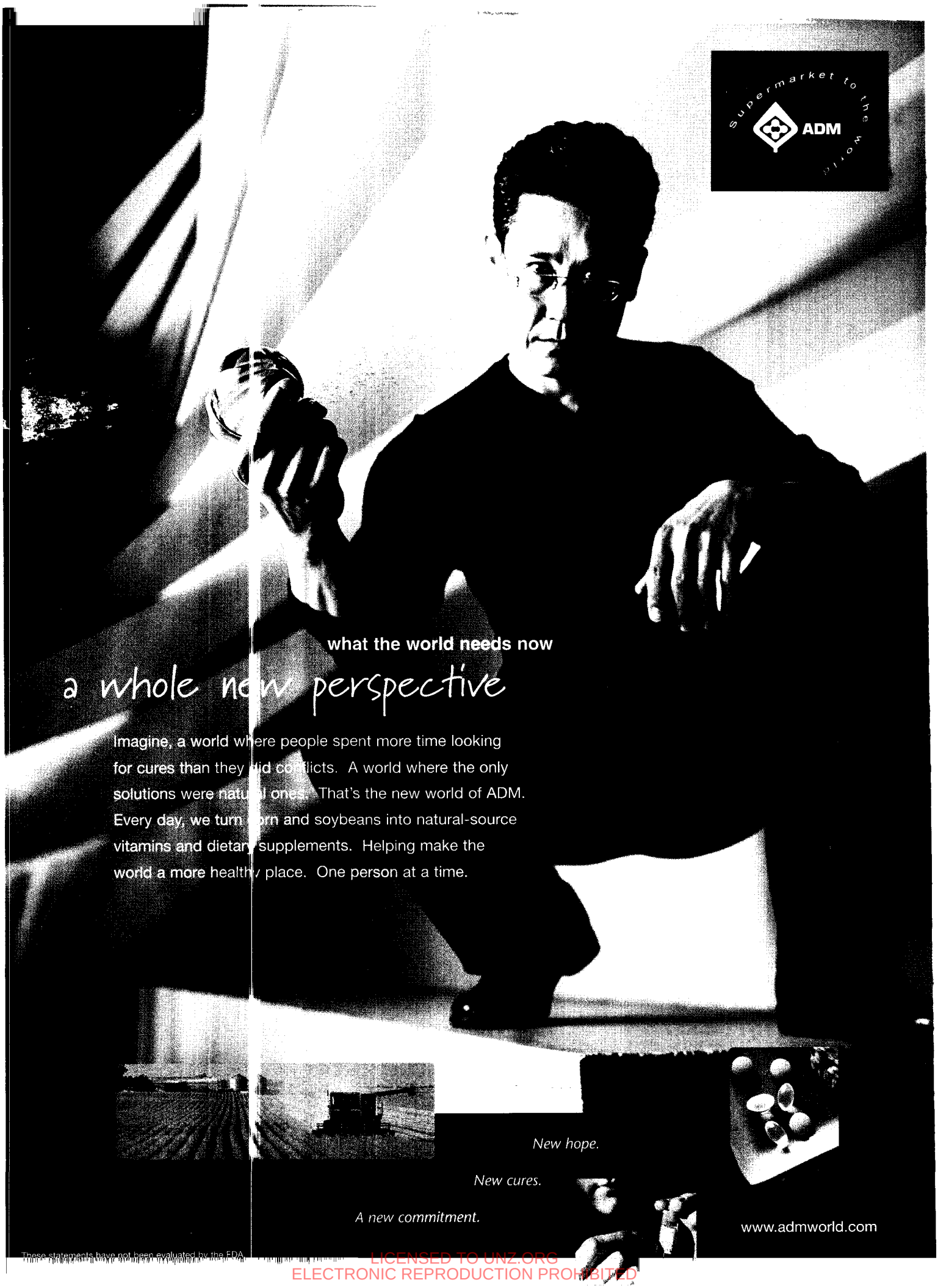
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